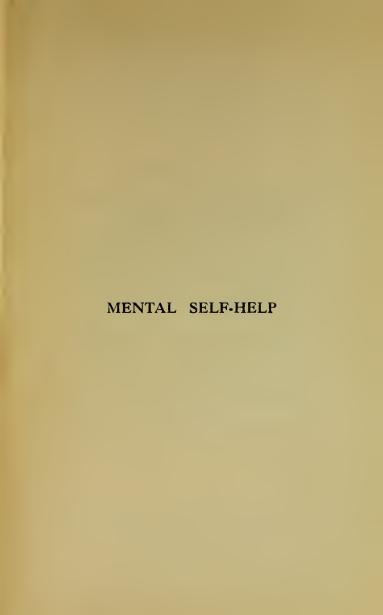




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MENTAL SELF-HELP

EDWIN L. ASH

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INTRODUCTORY

THE object of this little book is to summarise in a practical way reasonable methods of obtaining self-help through the exercise of our own mental powers. No encouragement is given to the claims of self-help systems that run counter to common sense and daily experience. The plain fact of the human body and the necessity of studying it carefully and learning how best to care for it and satisfy its needs are emphasised, and its interactions with our thoughts and emotions indicated as a basis for the working of self-suggestion. On the other hand, Man is recognised as having spiritual as well as mental and physical attributes, which bring him into touch with that Principle which is the ultimate source of all power, of all life, and of all healing. Throughout it is shown how the right place of methods of mental and spiritual self-help is by the side of routine medical or surgical measures, and that under no circumstances should they be used in opposition to the latter.

E. L. A.

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MENTAL SELF-HELP

CHAPTER I

SELF-HELP IN SICKNESS

HEAVEN helps those who help themselves.

A simple proverb familiar to us from early years, but one which holds within it the key to a great practical truth. It is the summing up in homely language of many observations that those who make a fight for health, life, or happiness invariably find the road to conquest made easier the more firmly do they struggle. The simple faith of our fathers left them no doubt that whenever they found things made easier for them in their determination to win through life's battles, an all-powerful Deity was making a personal effort on their behalf. There are many to-day who live in the same faith; and who shall deny the truth that is in them? On the side of science modern psychology says that there is within us a latent power for self-help and self-control which is capable of carrying us through great deeds under the inspiration of determination. We are told of the will to conquer and the will to be well as examples of this theory. The practical point is that we have not

to look far without seeing some remarkable instance of what an effort of mind-Will-can do in times of stress and strain or in days of doubt and difficulty. The Great War has given us countless instances of superhuman feats of valour and endurance compassed by the driving force of determination; also of remarkable recoveries of health and strength under circumstances where the sufferer has been encouraged to put forth an exceptional effort of Will. The practical point, then, is that there are powers of self-help available to man, and yet which do not operate until he makes a strong claim upon them. To my mind it is a quibble as to whether this power in essence comes from this or that source, because there can only be one original source of power, and that power we envisage when we speak of God. Clear enough it is that the added powers which we call to our aid when specially pressed have been sought through the operation of mind. It is a mental effort that we have to make. It is, indeed, upon mental selfhelp in one form or another that we must rely to bring us into touch with those forces of help and healing that lie outside the sphere of ordinary material aids, and which it is the object of this little book to illustrate and explain the workings of.

One of the things which first impressed itself on my observation when taking up the study of medicine was the operation of a factor outside the ordinary run of routine medical and surgical treat-

ment. It was something which was not referred to in one's curriculum, and did not seem to be systematised or taken any particular account of by the eminent doctors under whose authority one's early days were spent, but evidently it was a thing to be watched closely, to be encouraged, and to be worked with. Later on I realised that it was hope, cheerfulness, encouragement, love, working to stimulate determination. I was learning from personal experience what every observant medical man must learn, that there is a healing force which works through the mind as well as through the body. I remember quite well how my first attempt to discuss this question of mind and body were treated rather as a joke by fellow-workers and seniors, and I contrast that time-when there was practically no mention in our text-books of the importance of the mental factor in medicinewith the present era in science when on all sides schools of scientific psychology (mind healing) are springing up; when a leading hospital for nervous diseases is employing an expert psychologist for treatment; when, under the ægis of two great State departments-the War Office and Ministry of Pensions-thousands of disabled men are receiving the benefits of treatment through mind; and when in Harley Street and neighbourhood numbers of practitioners are specialising in suggestion, hypnotism, psycho-analysis, and so forth.

However, whilst in the twenty odd years that have

elapsed since my first observations on this subject I have lost nothing of my belief in the efficacy of mental and special agencies in the relief of sick people-indeed, I am more than ever convinced that herein we have enormous forces for healing as yet practically untouched-I must say that I feel very strongly to-day that the best use of mind in medicine that can be made by medical practitioners to-day is by teaching people to use the mental factor to help themselves rather than in ordering them long courses of "suggestion" or "psycho-analytic" treatment in which all the work is done by the psychologist and little or nothing by the patient. Our object to-day should be to train in self-control those who suffer from a wandering mind and loss of directive capacity; to improve in self-mastery those whose early training has not sufficed to put them beyond the reach of an unruly subconsciousness; and particularly to re-educate those who through some stress or accident of life have failed in nerve-notably sufferers from shellshock and its type—to regain their normal strength and control.

To-day everyone knows that all things which tend to depress the mind are detrimental to health and hinder recovery from ill-health; we all know that people get well much more quickly in bright and cheerful surroundings than when left to suffer in dismal circumstances. To-day there is many a physician who helps his patients along the road

to recovery by hopeful word and cheerful manner, definitely bringing right attitude and optimistic phrase into his plan of scientific treatment. But there is still room for much more systematic use of this principle. It is, of course, extraordinary how even in incurable diseases words of hope and encouragement confidently spoken by the doctor often act with great success in alleviating distress and sometimes even slowing a downward course. Particularly is the word of hope—the suggestion that all is well—helpful in the convalescent stages of severe illness such as influenza, acute rheumatism, pneumonia, or typhoid fever. This is a time when a period of sluggishness sets in such as often defies the ordinary resources of daily practice. It is the mental factor which is commonly at fault in these cases, and every effort should be made to brighten and encourage the patient's mental outlook. His mind must be energised and his own curative powers set to work to stir up the flagging vital centres and through these to stimulate the circulation and other processes of organic life. Convalescent patients should always be given a hint about self-help, and a few brief words as to how an invalid can reasonably set about to help himself are invaluable, and I hope that in its new form this, my little book on Mental Self-Help, which in earlier editions has been a means of assisting so many sufferers, will be found even more practical and helpful than before from this point of view.

Of course, one is often asked about religious aspects of mental self-help. There are many who feel very strongly that help of this kind should be taken to the highest possible level, and one would hesitate to disagree with them. From the purely scientific point of view the fact of a cure being brought about through mind is a matter of psychology, and as such can be entirely dissociated from anything to do with religion: indeed, the psychological doctor of to-day-suggestionist, psychologist, or what not-commonly resents his work being given a religious savour. But seeing that from the spiritual side come the most powerful psychological moving forces, and that the individual naturally feels an interest in him-self in relation to God, one cannot avoid the religious implications of mental treatment, whether we call it suggestion. psycho-analysis, persuasion, psycho-therapy, spiritual healing. The scientific worker must always fall a little short of his possibilities in this field if he persists in trying to make his patients regard themselves just as so many psychological problems. It is not in the nature of things that they should. There must be something beyond the merely scientific in this kind of work-there must be the human touch-and beyond that we look for the touch of the Living Spirit which one's human help really symbolises. The agnostic has wistful moments of seeking the spiritual heart of things.

CHAPTER II

FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTH

A VERY rich man is reported to have said once that he considered the chief advantage of wealth to be that it enables one to procure the best aids to keeping well and the best advice for getting back one's health when ill. Probably there are few millionaires who value their possessions more than their health. Money, rank, and influence are largely discounted for those who possessing these things know not what it is to feel really well. On the other hand, buoyant health enables its possessor to face ups and downs of this troublesome world with an equanimity that is denied to the sickly. For, as is evident, not only does the mind influence the body, but the body consequently reacts on the mind, and when unhealthy clogs the workings of human thought so that molehills of difficulty look like mountains of disaster, and passing clouds like raging thunderstorms. Only much training in the principles of self-help, and the attainment of a quiet mind that is able to resist these reactions of an unhappy body, can protect the individual from the jaundiced outlook that chronic ill-health brings even to those most well-to-do. There is, indeed, little good in this life for anyone who cannot manifest a fair measure of health, unless he has fortified himself through mind. To-day, although we live in an era when scientific researches of healing have been developed to a hitherto undreamed-of standard of efficiency, when everything that militates against disease has been brought to a high pitch, it is nevertheless comparatively rare to meet anyone who can say "I always feel well; sense of ill-health is unknown to me." Even the most healthy have many days of feeling unwell. Mankind must attain a far higher standard of health and strength if it is to reach that golden age which evolution (if it has any meaning at all) surely has in store.

The word "health," of course, descends from Anglo-Saxon words meaning "sound" or "whole," and Webster well defines health as "State of being whole, sound, or whole in body, mind, or soul," a distinction that may well be borne in mind. One cannot be in good health unless one is whole in body or mind; there is no health in us if we ail in either body or mind. But, as a matter of fact, the popular conception of health is being sound in wind and limb; anyone whose heart, lungs, or other internal organs are in good order, and has no twist or blemish in face or limb, is commonly regarded as being in perfect health irrespective of the state of his mind. One may note in passing that herein is the basis of that common fallacy which refuses to regard a person in apparent physical health as being ill when suffering from a nervous trouble; when health is generally understood to be a matter of mind as well as body the large army of sufferers from nerve troubles will receive a more reasonable sympathy than now falls to their lot.

From the point of view of the individual, health is not a matter of appearances, but of feeling well. If one gets up in the morning and feels well one does not bother much about possible irregularities anywhere else. On the other hand, he who rises in the morning feeling tired and ill gets small comfort from being told that he is in good physical health. There is a health of the mind and there is a health of the body, but these two things are but part of that greater health, the health of the whole human being. It is a fallacy to suppose that one is sound in mind and ill in body, or that one can be sound in body and ill in mind. Appearances may be deceptive, but no man is well-in health-unless he is sound in both. Health of the mind and health of the body go together; one cannot manifest without the other. We cannot get a fair view of the problem of health unless we dispossess ourselves of such fallacies as we have just indicated, nor until we have freed ourselves from another kind of fallacy, and that is the mistake of regarding disorders of health from a too narrow and local point of view. That these fallacies persist to-day is due entirely to that lamentable fallacy of education which omits all reference to the elementary

facts of anatomy and physiology. In the future this will doubtless be remedied, but the present generation was brought up quite in ignorance of the simple workings of the human system, and so is readily led away by false appearances. No blame attaches then to anyone for this misjudgment who has not had at any previous opportunity proper information about them; but to ignore the truth which has been revealed by reason is to court disappointment and possibly disaster in attempts of self-help in sickness. Just as one must insist on human body and human mind being regarded together, and as forming one whole-the human being-so in the matter of body, only it must be insisted that the physical system be regarded in its entirety when discussing questions of health. But the prevalent popular view is to think that the body can be ill at places and well in places at the same time; that, indeed, it constantly resembles that notorious curate's egg which has no rest from being dragged out to illustrate one thing or another. The curate told the bishop that his egg was excellent in parts, and most people like to think that their bodies are very good in parts however disordered elsewhere. I hold most strongly the view that no part of the body can be sick without there being echoes and reflections in all other parts; that the problem of physical health must be regarded as a whole, and that no method of diagnosis or treatment can be successful

that does not take this wide view of questions to be answered or matters to be dealt with. This is the point of view to which modern scientific medicine is rapidly reaching, but the old fallacy of looking upon illnesses as in the main disorders of localities is still very much in evidence. People like to think of their troubles as being due to individual diseases, and prefer to suffer under the banner of some definite label such as gout, rheumatism, indigestion, neuritis, anæmia, heart disease, pleurisy, and what not, instead of regarding their ailments from a more general point of view. The fact remains, however, that science is teaching us that these specific troubles, familiar to us in their familiar names, are but the special responses of particular organs to disturbances of the general system. The lesson of the recent influenza epidemic, however, must have brought home to many thoughtful people the great truth that we cannot any longer look upon ourselves as ailing only in odd corners and areas of the human body without the rest of the system being troubled. At the outset the man in the street regarded influenza as a sort of supercold—in other words, as an infection of the throat and chest; also he regarded pneumonia as a disease of the lungs, and it never occurred to him to regard it as having any bearing on the health of any other organs. However, after all that has been written on these subjects and all the explanations that have been given there must be many who now

realise that in illnesses of this kind one has to deal with the effects of germ poisonings which run right through the system and leave no part uncontaminated; that in addition to this general poisoning certain organs succumb more readily than others to particular toxins, and we thus have those flaming local manifestations, catarrh, tonsillitis, pneumonia, and so forth, which to the ignorant appear as the sole trouble, and mistake the general significance of the real illness. One must go further now and point out that so linked up are the various organs by the nervous systems, and by chemical reactions and interactions between the secretions of various glands carried hither and thither by the blood system, that it is impossible for one part to be disordered without all other parts being disturbed; and this disturbance may be very severe, or it may be very slight, but it is nevertheless real and important. I will go so far as to say, for the purpose of illustration, that one cannot grow a pimple on one's face without reactions (small as they may be in this instance) occurring in every other part of the body. What science has not yet made clear is the force that keeps all this machinery in going order; what physiology has not made plain is the nature of the power that maintains those countless reactions and activities in the human body which make not only the health of the individual, but his actual human life. Certain it is that whilst materialism gives no satisfactory answer to these questions, physiologists as a whole have not followed the simple faith of the religious man and accepted it as a fundamental truth that life is of the source of life—God—but have fallen back on assumptions of "vital energy" working in certain combinations of organic matter to produce the phenomena of living beings. It must be confessed that this is very much of an attempt to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. To-day physiological thought tends to work on a wider basis, and is not at all unwilling to allow for working of the infinite spirit of life which is immeasurable by human methods.

Yes; in spite of the closest anatomical investigations and most careful physiological experiments, there still evades the grasp of the scientist that marvellous Principle of Life that is the motive force of the whole human machine. It is something beyond the reach of material methods of examination; something that can only be grasped in mind. Of course, those who do really believe in-and know—the Infinite Spirit of Life that works throughout the world see at once that the finite cannot demonstrate the infinite. This question of the Living Principle in us must be carefully thought over by anyone who wants to understand the foundations of health, and to leave it out of consideration is to limit very greatly one's powers for mental self-help. THERE IS A VITAL impulse within us which carries us on year by year; a vitality

which keeps up the regular working of brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and so forth, and which maintains these extraordinarily delicate physical and chemical balances that are the basis of physiology. THERE IS ALSO AN INHERENT VITALITY of the tissues through which the living principle acts so that although life is there and striving to do great work it finds poor material to work on, and its effects are as it were wasted on air. There are the sickly in whom it is very true that the Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. In some impulse and inherent vitality are so strong that in spite of the obstacles of disease and accident it carries them through to very advanced years with faculties and functions little impaired, so that ultimately for these the end of earthly life is just the gentle running down of a machinery that inevitably has some day become over-worn-nothing more than a sleep descending comfortably on the aged. In others there seems always to be a lack of vitality so that although the Spirit of Life is working therein the human machine never manifests its full energies and grandeur of movement; the tissues lack strength, and either particular organs or the whole body too soon fails in the struggle against adverse conditions. When this is so one has the picture of delicacy and frail health. The defences against disease are weak and the resistance to the shock of accidents too feeble for convenience or comfort.

Now all the organic processes of the body, such

as the beat of the heart, or the movements of the chest in respiration, the action of the digestive organs and the mechanisms of excretions are under the control of the nervous system. Were it not for this control the functions of the body would be in hopeless confusion, as is seen when disease attacks the nervous centres and throws the whole system into disorder, with disastrous consequences. Indeed, it is almost certain that without this central control and co-ordination of the vital processes, the whole system of growth would be awry, and that the symmetry which is such a beautiful characteristic of growth and development in the higher living organisms would be lost. This being so, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the all-powerful nerve centres should be able to exercise an important influence over the course of disease, and that their action or inaction should frequently determine the fate of the sick. That this is so has only been appreciated during the last few years.

When a particle of dust is blown into one's eye, the particular centre controlling the eyelid causes the latter to close before we are even aware of what is threatened, and in most cases this action is efficient and the dust kept out. Similarly, with a thousand and one other simple things in everyday life; with the habits of walking and dressing, of writing and talking, and so forth, all the details of these habits are looked after by the various

nerve centres whose duty it is to control them; they are made up of actions which, from the apparent ease with which they are performed, we carelessly label "automatic," and think no more about.

Above and beyond the controlling influence of the brain and nerve centres there is Mind, which appears to be capable of acting as a definite "force" under various circumstances. Thus the Mind can control and influence muscular actions; and in so doing it must obviously exert a controlling influence through the centres in which the motor impulses arise. It seems evident from this, then, that the Mind, through the influence which it can exert over nerve centres, may be able to influence the various organs of the body. For there is plenty of evidence that there is a very constant relationship between mental processes and all bodily Indeed, examples of this relationship may be seen every day of our lives; the blushing which accompanies a feeling of shame is the outward manifestation of a dilatation of the bloodvessels of the face, brought about by impulses from the circulatory (vaso-motor) centres in the brain under the influence of a mental processemotion; the dyspepsia or loss of appetite that follows grief represents an inhibiting action of certain brain centres on the digestive processes; and similarly the rapid heart-beat or palpitation which follows the receipt of unexpected news represents an action of the centres controlling the heart under the influence of a sudden mental disturbance

Mind influence is, as a matter of fact, one of the common essential conditions of voluntary muscular action. Thus we know that by an effort of will we can so influence the motor nerve centres controlling, for example, the movements of the arm, that under ordinary circumstances we can move the arm whenever we wish so to do. But if the arm centre be disorganised or thrown out of action by, say, a clot of blood or a hæmorrhage into the brain, the arm can no longer be moved at will. Obviously, therefore, an intact arm centre in the brain is a necessary condition for the exercise of any mental influence over the movements of the arm. And there seems to be no reason for supposing that such influence can be brought to bear on the tissues and organs in any other way than through the medium of the nerve cells in the brain, and the nerve fibres which lead thence to all parts of the body.

So far I have only referred to the action of influence exerted by the mind of an individual upon his own body, and I must now turn to the consideration of the possibility of mental influence exerted by the individual, not upon his own system, but on that of someone else. And it is, of course, obvious that, granted the action of an individual's mind over his body on the lines indicated above, the alteration of his mental state or ideas from without will indirectly influence his physical being. Let us suppose, for example, that one calls up the feeling of shame in another person by pointing out

to him the full meaning of some doubtful act or transaction with which he has been connected; he will very probably flush at the thought of his deed. In such a case mental influence from without has acted in a particular way upon his mind, which in turn has influenced certain nerve centres controlling the blood-vessels, so that the latter have dilated, such dilatation being represented to the onlooker as "flushing." Further, in some people the mere suggestion of blushing will lead to the anticipated result being brought about, such an occurrence being an example of very direct mental influence exerted by one person, A, upon the organic functions of another person, B. Whenever we insinuate an idea into anyone's mind—that is, suggest it—we initiate mental processes which may or may not, according to the nature of the idea suggested, influence organic processes.

Possibly the production of dyspepsia—"indigestion"—by grief or anxiety is the example of mind influence over health which is most generally known, as such "nervous dyspepsia" is very common in medical practice. One of our most eminent physicians has remarked in this connection: "The effect of emotion upon the stomach is well known. A piece of bad news takes away the appetite, and may bring on sickness. Mental work immediately after a meal is very apt to disturb digestion, and if carried on regularly may lead to dyspepsia. I was once staying at a hydropathic

establishment near a large commercial town, when I observed that one of the rules was that any patient taking up a newspaper within an hour after dinner was fined one shilling. The reason for this was that the patients who came there were chiefly engaged in business, and the first thing they turned to in a newspaper was the money column; thus their minds became occupied with commercial affairs after meals, and digestion was not so good. Excessive weariness tends to cause indigestion, because the worried stomach and nervous systems do not respond to the stimulus of food. Worry, anxiety, disappointments, and especially a love affair, all tend to cause dyspepsia."

Now it has been found by experiment that the nerve centres maintain a condition of readiness for action in the various organs of the body—a condition of tone; thus the capacity of the muscles for work at any particular time depends to a very great extent on their "tone," and we know that if we are run down and our muscles are consequently in a flabby state, we cannot take much muscular exercise without being quickly tired. This important nerve tone is strengthened by the important nutritional impulses which are continually being sent out by the nerve centres and which serve to maintain the various organs in a state of health. If, for example, the nerves going

¹ Cf. Sir Lauder Brunton, in Allbutt's System of Medicine Vol. III, p. 399.

to a particular group of muscles are diseased, or the nerve centres governing them are disordered, those muscles become useless, lose their tone, and quickly waste away; this is partly through lack of the nutritive impulses which they must receive if they are to remain healthy and active. And as mental depression inevitably leads to lowered action of the nerve centres, it follows that when from various reasons the natural healthy activity of the mind becomes impaired, the activity of these centres will be reflected in a corresponding lowering of the vitality of the organs they control. The important relation between lowered activity of the nervous centres and the occurrence of various nervous diseases is now more or less generally recognised, but the far-reaching consequences of lowered nerve tone upon organic disease in general is not appreciated to anything like the extent it ought to be. Let us suppose, for example, that worry and anxiety have led to a disturbance of the digestive organs—that is, to indigestion following upon a lowered vitality of the brain centres controlling the digestive functions; this indigestion will be accompanied by want of tone in the muscles of the stomach and intestines, and by poorness of the digestive juices, in consequence of which the stomach will become dilated and distended with gas and partly digested food, as witnessed by the furred tongue, flatulence, discomfort, and constipation which go with these conditions,

In other cases depressed vitality of organs due to mental disturbance permits microbes to gain a foothold, as is seen in the readiness with which tuberculosis attacks individuals who are in a mentally debilitated condition. In many cases of serious illness can we trace the same series of events, the same downward path from health to ill-health—mental worry or distress lowering the tone of the various nerve centres, causing a lowering of tone and vitality in the tissues and organs, so that they are no longer capable of resisting disease.

In all cases where mental processes are to greater or less extent responsible for organic disease, we can trace a similar sequence of events, namely, mind disturbance, through worry, anxiety, or other emotion, leading to disorder of nerve centres—reflected in lowered local nutrition—which leads to ill-health.

Thus it is that we so often find such maladies as diabetes, gout, rheumatism, anæmia, neurasthenia, and skin troubles following on prolonged worry or sudden shock. In the midst of success or active contented life a man does not, as a rule, complain of muscular rheumatism or depressed health; but let a financial crisis occur and see how many previously healthy men come to us complaining of ill-health, that their "livers" are out of order, that they cannot digest their food, that they have bilious headaches, or palpitation, or a hundred and one other signs of impaired health.

CHAPTER III

MIND AND HEALTH

I is to be particularly noted that certain kinds of emotional states and the thoughts commonly connected therewith are at the root of much ill-health; to a degree, indeed, little dreamed of by the average person who has not given much attention to the relations between mind and body. I refer particularly to anger, fear, and worry, in regard to which it is easy to trace effects on health.

Let us consider for a moment the physical results of feeling very angry. In the first place there is considerable disturbance of the circulation, so that the blood stream is thrown out of its even course. The blood rushes to the face when passions are roused, and the expression "flushed with anger" is familiar to all. Sometimes instead it leaves the face, driven thence by the sudden contraction of the little vessels in the skin: and we have also the phrases, "white with rage" and "white-hot temper." Some people become red in face when they are only moderately angry, pale when terribly roused. In addition to these effects in the circulation when anger sways the mind, there is tension of muscles, with perhaps distortion of features; whilst in extreme cases it has happened that bloodvessels have burst, the heart stopped beating, or other dire catastrophe overcome the individual who has allowed a passionate storm of this kind to sweep through him unchecked.

The famous surgeon, John Hunter, who suffered from angina pectoris, used to say that his life was in the hands of anyone who roused his temper; a surmise which, as a matter of fact, was borne out by his dramatic death in the board-room of St. George's Hospital; then he was seized with a fatal attack after getting up in a fit of rage to make a denunciatory speech against one of his colleagues. A tragic and remarkable example which deprived the country of one of its greatest surgeons.

Professor Ball, of Paris, has recorded the case of a man aged twenty, who, when in perfect health, had a violent quarrel with a relative, in which he worked himself up into a terrible state of anger. On returning home and endeavouring to tell his wife what had happened, he found that he had become stone deaf and unable to speak. This condition lasted some days, but eventually quite cleared up; whilst the late Professor Murchison recorded the case of a soldier who, having been insulted in public, became furiously angry, rapidly developed an attack of jaundice, and soon died. Thus there is plenty of evidence, apart from the abundant records of everyday life, to the effect that these

¹ In the "Masters of Medicine" series, pp. 218-19.

intensely active mental states can produce serious effects on health, even unto death.

Obviously, then, if great anger can produce such dire results, lesser degrees of the same passion are likely to lead to regrettable effects on health that are none the less important because they are not so conspicuous. Indeed, those who have carefully looked into this matter know that the accumulated results of what may be termed many little angers are frequently as bad as those due to one severe attack of uncontrolled temper, the chief difference being that there is a longer interval before health is noticeably affected. I am constantly warning people against the consequences of "little angers." And it is because so many "little angers are not recognised as worth attention that they occasion such a lot of illness these days.

Anger-thoughts include those of impatience, malice, revengefulness, hatred, and malice. It is impossible to maintain that harmony which is health whilst constant strains are thrown on the system through thoughts of this kind having full play. Yet the Inner Self must be freed entirely from these adverse elements if the individual is to come into his full inheritance of a sound body sheltering a sound mind. Even righteous anger produces bad results in all except those comparatively few persons who have grasped the principles of mind-training and have had sufficient perseverance to carry them into practical effect.

Turning now to other mental attitudes that inevitably exercise a malign influence on health, we find two in evil partnership against human happiness-fear and worry. And I doubt if they are ever really far apart. Fear and worry are a deadly couple. The tale of their annual harvest of victims has never been fully told, largely because people have been blinded to the ill-works of these twain. After all, worry is dependent on fear. we never bothered about future consequences of present happenings-if we did not sometimes fear that all would not be well with us in the futurewe should never worry. So for practical purposes fear and worry can well be considered and condemned together. It is for the individual to see to it that they are duly executed as far as he is concerned. Further, in considering fear and worry, we must not overlook their minor representatives and allies-grief, petty anxieties, morbid selfintrospection, jealousy, and so forth. All these daily work their evil spells on thousands of tormented people, who have not yet come to the realisation that in themselves lies the power by which they may be liberated; people who are so far out of touch with the deep secrets of life and being that it seems often an almost impossible task to give them harmony and freedom.

In his interesting book, Mind and Body, Professor Wm. Bain, of Aberdeen, collected much evidence showing the effect of mental states on organic

function; another book of similar interest is the late Dr. Hack Tuke's work, The Influence of the Mind upon the Body. Both these should be read by any student of the subject who wishes to go more deeply into it than I can at present. As Professor Bain graphically put it, "Sudden outbursts of emotion derange the bodily functions. Fear paralyzes the digestion, and great mental depression enfeebles all the organs. Protracted and severe mental labour brings on disease of the bodily organs. On the other hand, happy outward circumstances are favourable to health and longevity."

One may note in passing that Wordsworth is said to have founded his poem, "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" upon the following curious story told by Erasmus Darwin (? the father of the great biologist), which strikingly illustrates the power of mind over body. "A young farmer in Warwickshire, finding his hedges broken and the sticks carried away during a frosty season, determined to watch for the thief. He lay many cold hours under a haystack, and at length an old woman, like a witch in a play, approached, and began to pull up the hedge; he waited till she had tied up her bundle of sticks, and was carrying them off, that he might convict her of the theft, and then springing from his place of concealment, he seized his prey with violent threats. After some altercation, in which her load was left upon the ground,

¹ W. Bain, Mind and Body, p. 11.

she kneeled upon the bundle of sticks, and raising her arms to heaven beneath the bright moon, then at the full, spoke to the farmer, already shivering with cold: 'Heaven grant that thou mayest never know again the blessing to be warm.' He complained of cold all the next day and wore an upper coat, and in a few days another, and in a fortnight took to his bed, always saying nothing made him warm; he covered himself with very many blankets, and had a sieve over his face as he lay; and for this one insane idea he kept his bed about twenty years, for fear of the cold air, till at length he died."

Another remarkable story on the same lines and one which was apparently vouched by the famous Dr. Charcot, actually deals with an example of fatal chill having been caught through contemplation of the subject—winter.

"The chief interest which attaches to M. Gervex's 'Winter,' which shows us the head of a charming girl, apparelled in furs, with a background of falling snowflakes, is the singular fate which overtook the model, a Mlle. Lafontaine. This young lady was not a professional model, but had sat, nevertheless, to some of the most eminent French painters, and had previously impersonated 'Summer' for this same artist. When she was asked to pose for a companion picture, 'Winter,' Mlle. Lafontaine, greatly to the painter's surprise, expressed the

¹ Hack Tuke, The Influence of the Mind upon the Body.

deepest reluctance, saying that she dreaded winter, that her mother had died of exposure in a snowstorm, and that she would only be tempting fate. The painter laughed and explained that the sitting for 'Winter' would only involve a posing for the head in furs, chiefly in his studio, with only one or two outdoor sittings to get the effect of snowclad trees and the falling flakes, and that there would be no exposure at all. Whereupon the sitter explained that she had a curious superstition on the subject; that Mlle. Granier, who had sat to the painter Brissot for that artist's 'Winter,' had actually caught a chill and died ten days afterwards of pneumonia. Mlle. Lafontaine ultimately was coaxed out of her fears, and, yielding to the painter's entreaties, gave him twelve sittings for the picture. But so strong was the force of suggestion that towards the end she invariably complained of feeling cold, despite the fact that the studio was very warm and the weather outside not cold even for December. When M. Gervex laughingly called her 'Mademoiselle L'Hiver' (Miss Winter) she threw up her hands and implored him not to do so. Some time afterwards, when the famous Dr. Charcot's attention was drawn to the case, he stated that it was purely one of suggestion, which had acted on the nerves and actually induced disorder—physical disorder. At any rate, the young lady continued to complain of cold, took to her bed, and, a fortnight after the final sitting for this picture of 'Winter,' died of pneumonia. The story was taken up by the Paris newspapers and the scientific reviews, with the result that, for a time, this picture had a great popularity.''1

Ruskin very truly said of the imagination that "It is the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses, and one which will appear more and more marvellous the longer we consider it." And in the practice of medicine and in the study of the conditions upon which health and ill-health depend, this wise saying finds ample fulfilment, and seems to have been prophetic in its utterance. Moreover, it is interesting to note that many years ago the members of a French Commission, appointed to study the mixture of science and sham which passed as the "Animal Magnetism " of that time, although obviously puzzled by the phenomena they observed, were certain of one thing, and that was the unquestionable dominion of Mind over bodily health; and they expressed their conclusions in no uncertain language, declaring that: "As to the Imagination, we know the derangement which a vivid and sudden impression has often occasioned in the human machinery. The Imagination renews or suspends the animal functions; it animates by Hope or freezes by Fear; in a single night it turns the hair white; in a moment it restores the use of the limbs or speech; it destroys or develops the germs of dis-

¹ Strand Magazine, "Art Favourites at Home and Abroad,"

eases; it even causes death." Which observations show that the powerful influence which Mind exerts over health has long been known, although its importance is only now becoming adequately recognised; and during recent years they have in the main been endorsed by Professor Bain, of the University of Aberdeen, who has collected a vast amount of evidence showing the effect of mental states on organic functions; and who, in concluding his investigations, stated that: "The influence of mental changes upon the body is supported by an equal force of testimony (i.e. as compared with the evidence that bodily actions can influence mental states). Sudden outbursts of emotion derange the bodily functions. paralyzes the digestion, and great mental depression enfeebles all the organs. Protracted and severe mental labour brings on disease of the bodily organs. On the other hand, happy outward circumstances are favourable to health and longevity."1

The influence of self-suggestion over vital processes of life is from time to time illustrated by those cases in which patients about to be anæsthetised "go off" before the chloroform or other drug has had time to act. I remember an instance in which an operation was about to be performed on an intelligent boy who had so damaged his thumb that removal of part of it had become necessary;

¹ W. Bain, Mind and Body, p. 11,

the poor little chap was terribly anxious in spite of everything that had been done to comfort him, and a towel having been lightly thrown over his face to prevent him looking at his damaged hand he at once began to cry out, "I am going off, I am going off," and sure enough he soon fell into a sleep in which it was found that the hand had become insensible to pain, and all that was necessary could be carried out without an anæsthetic being administered after all. A striking example of the effect of imagination on the plastic mind of a boy who thus became insensible to pain, solely a result of the impression of self-suggestion that he was being sent off to sleep. Time after time have I noticed that persons taking gas in the dentist's chair have become insensitive to pain much sooner than might have been expected from the action of the anæsthetic only, and have not infrequently known patients to have teeth extracted without discomfort although very little gas had been given. In cases of this kind the sufferer is seen to fall into an obviously anæsthetised stage very quickly, so that the administration of the gas can be discontinued without any risk of pain being caused. Some remarkable examples of this kind of happening were recorded by the late Dr. Woodhouse Braine. the celebrated anæsthetist, to Dr. Hack Tuke, and quoted by him in his interesting work, The Influence of the Mind upon the Body. Of two cases it is related that a patient about to be chloroformed on

having a facepiece applied so that she might get used to it soon began to breathe rapidly, and said, "Oh, I feel it, I feel I am going off," and actually fell into an anæsthetic sleep before the chloroform bottle had been taken up by the anæsthetist. Finding that she did not respond to any touch of the skin or to gentle or hard pinches it was decided to begin the operation on the head that was to be carried out. This was then successfully performed, and afterwards she "came round" just as if she had been chloroformed, and on being questioned asserted that she had felt no pain at all and had been quite unconscious of all that had been carried out; indeed, it is related that she left the hospital quite convinced that she had been given a powerful anæsthetic.

Of another case it is said that under similar circumstances several teeth were removed without discomfort—and certainly without anæsthetic—on more than one occasion.

Dr. Lloyd Tuckey, for many years a keen student, in his work on psycho-therapeutics collected a large number of examples illustrating mental influence on bodily functions. Three cases in particular which occurred within the experience of this observer are especially noteworthy, and I quote Dr. Tuckey's description of them. He writes: "While in Jamaica I knew a young lady who had for many months been confined to her bed or couch, unable to walk a step from apparent paralysis of

the lower extremities, which entirely defied the treatment used. One morning news was brought to her that her brother, to whom she was devotedly attached, had fallen from his horse, and was lying in a critical condition some miles away in the mountains. She immediately got up herself, helped to saddle a horse, rode to the scene of the accident, and nursed her brother night and day for a week. She was completely and permanently cured of the paralysis, which, of course, was merely functional and hysterical, by the nervous shock which had brought her will into operation.

"A somewhat similar case came under my observation some years ago. A clergyman in whose house I was staying had long been a sufferer from chronic rheumatism, through which he was so disabled that he could only walk very slowly and with great inconvenience. On this occasion he was lying on a sofa from which he could see through an open door and across a hall into another room, where his wife happened to be. By some careless movement she upset a table there, and, as if by magic, he sprang to his feet and walked rapidly and with a perfectly even step into the opposite room, exclaiming, 'There goes all the ink that was in the house, and I have to write my sermon!'

"In this instance, however, the cure was as ephemeral as the emotion which had caused it; but it is not improbable that a continued excitement might have prolonged the power of easy motion, and so have broken down and caused absorption of the adhesions and exudations which produce the pain.

"I remember at a water picnic, a young lady complained of terrible neuralgia. From some cause the boat began to rock violently, and she became extremely nervous. Her fear of being upset completely drove away the neuralgia, which did not return, at least on that occasion. It is known that sufferers from sea-sickness almost invariably became well in moments of danger; and we can often lose the sense of pain by occupying our mind with some affair of great interest."

This reminds me of a remarkable instance of deformity and paralysis that came under my observation some years ago. The patient was a young girl who exhibited such malformation of one leg, with pain, that it was at first thought that she had serious hip-joint disease. My personal opinion was that the whole thing was mental in originhysteria-and that nothing but a strong mental impression would set it right. Eventually her doctor decided to administer an anæsthetic, and tell the patient that whilst under the anæsthetic certain manipulations would be performed which would most certainly result in a cure of her trouble. Laughing gas was given as being without danger, and leaving no unpleasant after consequences, and all that was done to the patient was to bandage the

¹ Cf. Treatment by Hypnotism and Suggestion, p. 11.

affected limb in an imposing manner. The result was entirely satisfactory, and a complete cure obtained. Clearly in this case Mind Force was responsible for the relief of the illness. A mental impression of cure—such as I have elsewhere termed the "Cure Idea"—was conveyed to the paralytic, and thus set in motion the dormant nerve centres, whose defective action was at the root of the functional paralysis and deformity.

Thus there appears to be so much evidence that the mind exercises a paramount influence and control over health, that one may well wonder how it is that the mental factor is so seldom taken into account in the prevention and treatment of disease. Certainly the opinions quoted show that this influence is well recognised nowadays by many leading authorities, and that such recognition is finding a place in the current text-books of the day; but in spite of this the fact remains that there is nothing like the proper appreciation of this all-important factor in treatment amongst the majority of medical practitioners, whilst, on the other hand, the layman seems quite oblivious of the fact that his bodily health is greatly dependent on his mental state, and can at all times be influenced through his mind. I feel sure that it is this neglect that is responsible for the failure of treatment in many instances, and which permits the presence in our midst of so many so-called "chronic" and "incurable" invalids.

As a matter of fact, one could go on indefinitely giving examples of the influence of Mind over Body, but no doubt those mentioned will be sufficient to lead my readers to call to mind things observed by themselves which also illustrate it. I would suggest that they think of how much better one can bear stress and exposure when the mind is cheerfully attuned, and how quickly small troubles tend to break down health when the mind and "nerves" are exhausted, or the prey of grief. For example, the reason that people so commonly take chills at funerals is undoubtedly to be found chiefly in the fact that the depressed attitude of mind naturally attendant on such melancholy occasions so lowers the vital powers of resistance that the system is more likely to be affected by temporary exposure in the open air than normally. Dr. Rush, the celebrated American physician, used to declare that soldiers favoured by the fortune of war do not feel cold and exposure anything like those of the beaten side. He noted that after the battle of Trenton, in the American War of Independence. the victorious Philadelphia Militia, although accustomed to all the comforts of a city life, slept in the open air in the coldest time of the year with practically no sickness amongst them, Dr. Rush's explanation being that the stimulus of victory had reacted so favourably upon their general health that those militiamen were for the time being resistant to cold and exposure. Most probably he was quite right.

Quotations could be made from the writings of many others, illustrating the depressing effects of health brought about by mental stress and shock; a few may be given here to indicate some of the maladies which have been known to occur under these circumstances. Thus the late Sir William Gowers, eminent as a specialist in nervous diseases, regarded fright or anxiety as an important factor as being not infrequently important causes of epilepsy, and wrote that, "As a direct excitant of the first fit intense sudden alarm takes the first place. It can be traced in a considerable proportion of cases. . . . An illustration may be given. The instance referred to is that of a nervous sentinel who was on duty one night near a dark churchyard. A white goat suddenly ran across the churchyard and jumped upon the low wall. The man, convinced it was a ghost, shook with terror, but was unable to desert his post. An epileptic fit soon followed, which was succeeded by others. . . . Prolonged anxiety seems also to be a definite cause, although the more gradual mode of its onset makes it less easy to trace with certainty."1

He also recorded two instances in which St. Vitus' dance (chorea) followed sudden fright. The victim in one case was a boy who was upset by a pistol shot close by; whilst the other, also a boy, was caught up a tree stealing apples, and was so frightened that he fell to the ground. I myself

¹ Cf. Allbutt's System of Medicine, Vol. VII, p. 767.

have known St. Vitus' dance to follow sudden fright; in this instance the sufferer was a young girl who had been frightened by a gipsy in a country lane.

On occasion paralysis has been brought about through fear, as in an instance recorded in the *Medical Times* many years ago. A man charged two relatives with assault, and summoned his own father as a witness. The mother of the prisoners, exasperated at the prospect of the son being sent to prison on the evidence of her relative, gave expression to her feelings in malediction, praying that when the old man left the witness box he might be paralysed; and paralysed he was accordingly, and had to be taken to the hospital.¹

Some years ago Dr. Wiltshire recorded an instance of facial paralysis from fright, which came under his notice at the West London Hospital, and was of some weeks' duration.²

With regard to other emotional states I have myself come across many instances of severe derangement of health which have been directly traceable to mental depression, worry or anxiety. I have seen severe and intractable anæmia attack previously strong individuals who had had to face prolonged worry about business or private affairs, and I have watched tuberculosis spring into terrible activity in persons mentally depressed from various causes. I have had to deal with many cases of

Vide Medical Times, May 25, 1868.
 Vide Lancet, Feb., 1871.

paralysis certainly due to faulty action of the mind (neuromimesis), as well as instances of continuous tremblings, ticklings, and tremors of mental origin, and cured by mental treatment. And I have not infrequently seen extensive skin disease follow mental strain or shock—notably eczema, urticaria, and herpes (shingles). On one occasion I saw an artisan who had been worried to distraction through loss of employment, and in whom that remarkable disease of the skin known as dermatitis herpetiforme rapidly developed.

At the International Congress in 1881 Mr. Dalby (quoted by Hack Tuke) said: "I have known the hearing in apparently healthy subjects to be almost completely lost on the witnessing a sudden death of a near relative, on several occasions immediately upon the receipt of news of a painful nature, in the case of women upon the fright produced by a cry of fire or an alarm of burglars in the house, at the witnessing of the terrible sight of a man cutting his throat; even on the receipt of great good fortune which had not been anticipated. On each of these occasions the hearing power of the patient was always perfectly good up to the time of the catastrophe, and immediately afterwards the deafness was intense, so that the change in all probability was almost instantaneous."1

Another serious condition frequently brought on by worry is exophthalmic goitre, a distressing

¹ Influence of the Mind upon the Body, Vol. I, p. 205.

disease in which great swelling of the neck and protuberance of the eyes combine with excessive nervous irritability and excitement to make the victim's life a burden. "The malady is often consequent upon acute disease, fright, or other severe mental shock, and over-fatigue. . . Fright, intense grief, and other profound emotional disturbances have long been recognised as immediate causes of the disease."

Some years ago I saw a young woman in whom this trouble immediately followed shock due to the extraction of a bad tooth.

Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that mental influence, for example, under the stress of intense emotion, may produce so profound an organic disturbance that jaundice results, as in two cases quoted by the late Professor Murchison. In one of these instances, previously referred to, a soldier, insulted in public, in a fit of furious anger became suddenly jaundiced, and soon afterwards died. In the other the patient, who was suddenly frightened by a mad dog, uttered a cry and became deeply jaundiced. These cases are very similar to one recorded by the late Sir Thomas Watson, in which anxiety about an approaching examination brought on jaundice in a student.

In regard to the influence of the mind on diseases of the heart, a well-known authority says:

¹ Cf. Ord and Mackenzie in Allbutt's System of Medicine, Vol. IV, pp. 489, 490.

"The consciousness of heart trouble has often a depressing effect upon people, whether the trouble be slight or serious. When such people become convined theat the trouble is curable or not serious, their condition at once becomes greatly improved. Cures by faith, whether in drugs, baths, elaborate methods, or religion, act by playing upon the mental condition. I have already said that we should always study the mental condition of the patient, and its bearing upon his complaint, and we should utilise its peculiar features in treatment. But an employment of this element in treatment should not be the outcome of blind, unreasoning faith in some rite or ceremony, bath or drug, but in the intelligent perception of the nature of the symptoms. The reassurance of the patient of the harmless nature of the complaint goes a great way in curing him, the reassurance that with reasonable care no danger need be feared is extremely helpful. Even in serious cases, when there is reasonable hope of recovery, or a certain degree of recovery, the encouragement of the patient may and does help forward his improvement."1

The same writer has also pointed out the harm that may be done by a physician who carelessly neglects to take into account the importance of Mind Force in the treatment of heart disease.

"This mental factor should, on the other hand, make us extremely chary of giving the patient

¹ James Mackenzie, Diseases of the Heart.

a gloomy prognosis. There is nothing in my experience so surprising as the manner in which the heart can recover from the seemingly most hopeless condition of exhaustion. And we must bear in mind that a gloomy outlook may in itself nullify the best attempts at treatment. We should aim at getting the patient into a placid, contented, hopeful frame of mind, so that the heart is not disturbed by emotional reflexes."

As heart trouble itself produces depression, it is obviously difficult for anyone afflicted with it to assume the hopeful mental attitude that is conducive to rapid recovery. Consequently the physician is, or should be, as responsible for the mental part of the treatment as for the medicinal; that is to say, he must use every means in his power to stimulate the patient's mental energies and to banish worry and fear by his careful suggestion—direct as well as indirect.

It sometimes happens that people get into a terrible state of anxiety about their hearts, owing to their having been told that they had a "weak heart" by some over-conscientious doctor, who had considered it his duty to lay the greatest stress on some slight abnormality, and to magnify it to the proportions of a serious disorder.

CHAPTER IV

SELF-CONTROL: AND HOW WE WASTE OUR ENERGIES
THROUGH LACK OF IT

THE last thing a man likes to admit is want of self-control, and even to himself he will make excuses for weak conduct. Many a weary individual is the victim of self-deception that has led him to waste energies that would, if properly directed, have enabled him to carry on his life's work without feeling the strain which is slowly wearing him out. Little habits are allowed to grow into big ones that require an enormous amount of trouble to uproot. Little habits that are useless in themselves and waste a vast amount of power which should be conserved for the serious purposes of daily life. Henley's well-known and oft-quoted stanza:

It matters not how straight the gate,

How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

gives the key to the position. Whatever we may do, or however much we may try to evade the issue, the fact remains that we are responsible for the use of our will-power—we are "masters of our fate."

As regards self-help through mental exercise the practical point to be made use of at once is that

habitual self-mastery in the little things of life makes for such a self-state that abundant powers of self-defence will be ready to hand when some crisis of physical or moral health occurs. The man who has not bothered to conquer some little trick of his hands is at a loss when the time comes to decide an issue of importance that needs firm Will and Deed: as at a time when alcoholism or the drug-habit threatens liberty or life itself. The woman who never denies any social pleasure cannot call up the requisite will-power when nervous troubles loom on the horizon of her happiness; or when some combination of circumstances suddenly forces upon her the necessity for an immediate moral decision of far-reaching consequences.

A notable characteristic that distinguishes great men from their lesser fellows is their power of inhibition, of self-forbidding—that is, their power for exercising a ready veto over their actions. The power of inhibition is a gift implanted in every healthy baby. Its useful development depends then on the teaching of parents, nurses, and school-masters in the first place; latterly on the appreciation of the individual's own inner self. The problem of developing this self-control in years of discretion is one that has been much neglected, but is now being more and more considered by those who believe in a better future for the human race, and the higher development of man on earth.

The cultivation of self-mastery is largely dependent on individual capacity for attention (concentration). It is useless for anyone to attempt to increase his self-control unless he first pays due regard to his ability to concentrate his mind and to pay attention to one thing at a time. Mindwandering is the great difficulty that besets those who lightly set out on the path to higher selfdevelopment. Indeed, the gradual acquirement of a wandering mind is not infrequently the cause of a restless nervous condition which could have been prevented if due thought had been given to mental hygiene in everyday life. When overcome by nervousness many people complain that "they cannot fix their attention "-that they "cannot keep their minds from wandering "-and so forth. The curious thing is that in many instances the mind-wandering has really grown upon the victim of this disquieting state of things all unbeknown to himself; has been growing on him perhaps for months or years before resulting in such a mental state that work has become impaired and life made miserable.

Yet how few people ever think that it is necessary or advisable to pay much attention to their mental powers under ordinary circumstances. Rarely until health is impaired and disaster threatened do people begin to bother about strengthening that fortress of the Will which can protect from many foes to success and happiness when properly manned

and armed. It is far too often a case of hastening to shut the stable door after the horse has been stolen. At the same time I think that our present educational methods, which so entirely neglect this side of mind training, are very much to blame in allowing many persons to attain adult life without any reasonable idea of mind training. It is rare that growing boys and girls are given any practical guide as to how they may best attain that self-mastery and will-power that shall protect them from the snares of modern life and the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In this little book it would be impossible to include any adequate scheme of mind-training applicable to the purposes of general education. The most I can do is to indicate the main lines on which the adult individual or even the understanding learner of earlier years must work in an endeavour to obtain that Captaincy of the Soul which should be the ideal of every human being. At the same time an outline of mental exercises that will be found useful can be given. It must not be forgotten that in any particular case faulty powers of concentration, attention, and self-control may be dependent on some idea, or the memory of an unhappiness or misdeed, that still holds sway in the depths of the subconscious mind, although long passed out of the ordinary remembrance. Under such circumstances it is usually necessary that the mental field be analysed by someone who understands these things before the right path can be discovered.

The seeker after strength very often tells one that he quite realises the paramount importance of developed powers of concentration and attention. Realises, indeed, that these are absolutely essential to any healthy, well-poised being. But the constant cry is, "How can I attain increased powers of concentration and attention? How can I develop the germ of attentive and concentrative ability which is born in me? So many tell me that I must learn to attend. But none tell me how I can help myself in this respect."

This is, of course, a very real practical difficulty, and has no doubt arisen largely because writers on these subjects have hesitated in giving general directions, well knowing that it is only possible to help many by special exercises and instruction adapted to their particular cases. But having made this quite clear, and duly pointed out the limitations experienced in the following general rules, I have no objection to giving a few broad hints and generally applicable exercises. In any case the rules and directions given throughout this book will never produce any adverse effect. Even where used by the most tormented minds they will bring a certain measure of help and relief, although they may not be quite all that is required for troubles of long standing.1

¹ See Appendix.

The first thing to be considered in learning to develop one's powers of concentration is the nature of the process contemplated. The term itself presupposes something to concentrate upon. It is an obvious truism that one cannot concentrate without something to turn the mind to. I only mention the fact so as to bring to the reader an absolutely clear view of the process in question. The next thing to appreciate is that objects for concentration may be divided into two main classes, namely, (1) material things, (2) abstract ideas. It is very much easier to keep the mind on anything included in the first class than on those of the second category. Consequently any course of self-development should begin with concentration on material objects. Most people wish to hasten away to the contemplation of mental ideas or the attainment of mental attitudes which they think may help them most to overcome their weaknesses or ill-health. It is a mistake so to do until the habit of concentrating with ease on visible, tangible material objects has first been achieved. earliest attempts at fixing the mind are nearly always frustrated by the "jumpiness" of the attention. As soon as the beginner tries to fasten his attention on any particular thing, he finds the mind wanders away time after time in spite of his efforts to control it.

In such a case the mind-wandering surely proves the need of mental training. Here we see the chief

instrument of the Higher Self, the means by which it maintains its contact with the things of this world, the link between the Spiritual and the Material, we see this important part of human unity out of control and ill-adapted to the requirements of daily life. Supposing the Admiralty wish to concentrate their warships at a threatened point, and find that through want of training and co-ordination it is impossible to keep the fleet together for more than a few hours at a time, what disastrous results would assuredly follow. It is much the same when in some crisis of life the Self endeavours to collect its mental forces, and then, owing to neglected training, finds it is unable to concentrate effectively its fleet of thoughts on the required point. That is why disaster both in health and fortune so commonly overtakes those who are careless in their mental habits. That is why busy men and women who have not learnt to control "themselves," that is their minds, find themselves unable to grapple with the threatening signs of nervous and physical breakdown which is the penalty of careless use of mind and body. On the contrary, those who have been wise enough to develop their innate mental powers find themselves in a position of strength and advantage in any such time of adversity.

In daily life innumerable opportunities for exercising self-control present themselves, and according to our attitude towards these we either get the best out of our efforts or we waste our energies in spendthrift fashion. And here we are at once in touch with practical applications of self-mastery which are of first-rate importance to our health and happiness, and even to our prosperity. To understand how this is so, and how great an influence self-control has in the lives of each of us, it is necessary to linger for a moment to consider the problem of our energies; then by understanding how often we squander these heedlessly instead of endeavouring to preserve our strength against a day of trial, we can realise how best to avoid such waste and to make the best of our capacities, using Will to shut the door upon waste at every turn.

HOW WE WASTE OUR ENERGIES

Everyone must have a personal interest in the subject of human energy, for the best things of life are for those who have the energy to obtain them; although, be it remembered, mental and spiritual energy frequently stand for as much, if not more than, physical energy in the world of achievement.

Without energy progress is impossible, and in the conduct of a cause, when energy fails, all is lost from that moment.

How often one sees empires and states, and on a smaller scale, governments and business organisations falling to pieces because of the collapse of the individual who has held the guiding reins. Even the majestic temple of power erected by Napoleon crumbled to the dust when increasing physical grossness smothered the fires of his Inner Life, so that he became sluggish in movement and apathetic in thought.

One of the most familiar differences between one human being and another is the energy manifested by each in daily life. Some people are clearly much more energetic than others. Again, some people are energetic physically and carry out to a successful conclusion much work of a kind that would be impossible to those who, on the other hand, are very energetic mentally, whilst not exhibiting much power in the exercise of their physical bodies. Yet, again, there is another group of persons exemplified by the great mystics, whose energy output is enormous, but is of an entirely spiritual nature so that to those who do not understand the higher phases of human nature such persons may appear to be apathetic mentally, and utterly slack physically.

Thus it is clear that in appraising the energy value of any particular individual we must not confuse the issue and blame him or her for slackness for not exhibiting just the particular kind of energy, or its results rather, for which we are looking.

It is given to few to be able to manifest great energy on all three planes—physical, mental, and spiritual—and those who are thus fortunate are the giants of the race, At the outset of any discussion on human energies it is as well to remember that the term "energy" is used as a convenient expression for something of which we are fully aware, but have difficulty in describing, and can really never demonstrate, what we actually deal with being the results of energy and not energy itself.

The average individual who is asked to think of some example of great energy will most likely think of the steam-engine, which plays such an important part in civilised life, or, nowadays, he may think of electricity, upon which we are becoming more and more dependent daily, both for transit from place to place and for light and warmth. Let it be remembered, then, that energy, which is defined in the dictionary as "power of doing work," is often spoken of when referring to the actual work done. No one has ever seen or handled energy; it is a concept of the human mind. Again, one can be fully aware in a thousand ways of the work which depends upon energy, as that is an actuality capable of demonstration.

In daily life it is not only essential that the individual who intends to be successful should understand upon what things to depend for the energies which are to carry him through the struggle for existence, but he must know how to make the best of such energies as are his. This is most important, because it falls to very few to be able to rely upon inexhaustible stores of bodily energy.

The average person can only make use of a certain quantity of energy. It is because so many squander the energies they have that one sees the breakdowns and failures, particularly in the big civilised communities, which are such a conspicuous feature of human life at the present day.

To be efficient, then, and so to be successful, requires not only knowledge of how to obtain energy, but how to make the best of what one can obtain by using it sparingly with forethought and with due regard to the accumulation of reserve stores of energy upon which we can rely in times of stress and crisis.

The great nerve-strain thrown upon people to-day by increasing competition necessitates that more attention should be paid to general physical and psychological principles of sufficiency. At the present time the ideal of a "sound mind in a sound body" should be more earnestly striven for than ever.

People could quite well bear the strain of modern life if they understood better how to preserve their nerve-energies. Every day a vast amount of nerve-energy is wasted in trifles.

The first step towards attaining efficiency is to learn self-control, so as to direct both physical activities and mental activities. People who lack self-control waste an enormous amount of nerveenergy in unnecessary restlessness, tricks of manner, and general exhibition of hurry and haste.

Common examples of energy-wasting habits are:

Very rapid speech.
Hasty meals.
Quick, nervous footsteps.
Allowing oneself to be irritated by trifles.
Rushing for trains, trams, and omnibuses.
Too tight clothing.

To be satisfied with carrying out just the routine details of daily work is a poor ideal; for example, in nursing, the nurse who brings to her professional work the whole force of her personality, and remembers that she has to deal with diseased minds as well as diseased bodies, can bring the greatest relief to the sick, support to the dying, and comfort to the sorrowing.

The last thing an individual likes to admit is want of self-control, and even to himself he will make excuses for weak conduct.

Habitual self-mastery in the little things of life makes for such a condition of mental poise that abundant powers of self-defence will be found ready to hand when some crisis of physical or moral health occurs.

People who lack self-control waste an enormous amount of nerve-energy in unnecessary RESTLESS-NESS, tricks of manner, and general exhibition of hurry and haste. VERY RAPID SPEECH, HASTY MEALS, NERVOUS HURRYING along the street, are common examples of energy-wasting habits.

Three very important energy-wasters are:

- I. Indigestible and hurried lunches.
- 2. Too tight clothing.
- 3. Needless worrying about details of domestic, professional, and business life.

There is a large class of persons to whom the term "Can't Waiters" can well be applied. Such persons are unable to wait for anything. They speak and act without thinking; they are always anxious to get on to the next item in the day's programme. They waste their energies all day through their restlessness and haste.

General rules that will help in the CONSERVATION OF NERVE-ENERGY, and therefore make for EFFICIENCY, include the following:

- I. Wear reasonably loose clothing.
- 2. Spend at least one hour in the open air daily.
- 3. Always get up at the same time.
- Practise self-control in the little things of daily life, particularly—

Eat slowly. Dress slowly. Walk slowly. Speak slowly.

The woman who never denies herself any social pleasures cannot call up any reserves of mental powers when nervous troubles loom on the horizon of her happiness.

Our present educational methods are much to blame in allowing so many persons to attain adult

life without any reasonable idea of the importance of mind-training.

The problem as to how workers are to get the most energy out of their meals is one of great economic importance.

Much of the food that is eaten in the popular places of resort at midday entails as much energy in the process of assimilation and digestion as can be derived from the food itself under the most favourable circumstances.

There is not the slightest doubt that thousands of cheap lunches are eaten in London every day that appease the appetite without supplying the necessary latent energy.

It is a lamentable thing that thousands of people who have been breathing the not too hygienic atmosphere of shops, factories, and offices during the day take their recreation in the stuffy air of music-halls, skating-rinks, and picture-palaces.

Most of us are living below our true value in the matter of Energy Production. There can be no question that many people have acquired a poor energy habit.

There are thousands of people at the present time invalided through exhaustion and over-work who yet possess in themselves great stores of energy which they are unable to tap.

It must be one of the tasks of future scientists and physicians to discover how jaded humanity can make use of its reserve stores of energy. Few things are such potent energy releasers as the stimulus of a Great Idea or of a Great Ideal.

In the pursuit of a Noble Ideal a comparatively weak individual can carry out work impossible to stronger persons untouched by spiritual forces.

Let me give you a few illustrations as to how anger, fear, and useless small worries can depress health and waste your nerve-energies. anger first, most of us can remember probably from personal experiences how very tiring it is to have an outburst of very bad temper and how much energy can be expended in rage. Whenever people become very angry, energy is expended in increased beats of the heart and rushes of blood through the body. It is expended in the tension of muscles, the contortion of features, and all the violence of rapid, loud speaking, when vent is given by the spoken word. Such a strain is not infrequently put upon the system that bloodvessels burst, so that the angry person falls dead in a fit of apoplexy. Under such strains it has happened that the heart has stopped beating or other dire catastrophe has overcome the individual who has allowed an anger storm to rage in his being unchecked. We may remember that the famous surgeon, John Hunter, who suffered from a very serious form of heart-disease, used to say that his life was in the hands of anyone who roused his temper. Moreover, we may remember that his surmise was quite correct, as was shown by his dramatic death in the board-room at St. George's Hospital, when he was seized with a fatal attack after getting up in a fit of rage to make a speech, attacking one of his colleagues.

Cases have been recorded of people becoming stone-deaf or jaundiced through attacks of uncontrolled temper; and I do not think it will be necessary for me to give you further evidence of the depressing and wasting effects of intense anger, as they may be seen around us everywhere. Clearly, then, if great anger can produce such serious results, lesser degrees of the same passion must just as certainly lead to waste and depression of health. Indeed, I am quite sure that they who allow themselves to be swayed by many little angers about trifles of the least importance are likely to be affected even more than those who permit themselves the luxury of an occasional flare-up. Let me strongly warn you against the ill-consequences of little angers, and of allowing the petty annoyances of life to provoke you to an actual feeling of angriness.

In the same group of anger-thoughts we must include those of impatience, malice, revengefulness, hatred, and strife. It is impossible to maintain that harmony which brings health whilst constant strains are thrown on the system through such thoughts being allowed full play. Fear and worry likewise will destroy appetite, upset the digestion, depress the circulation, disturb sleep, and impoverish the

blood; whilst sudden frights, as I need not remind you, constantly produce all sorts of serious acute nervous and mental disorders, amongst which I may mention fits and insanity as serious examples. It is inevitable that there must be things in our daily lives which occasion a certain amount of thought, and at times things that it is difficult to avoid worrying about; but the practical consideration is that the majority of things that people fear or worry about are, in their true value, but trifles which should not be allowed to disturb the placidity of the INNER SELF.

There is only one way of placing yourselves beyond the reach of the energy-wasting mindattitudes represented by unnecessary angers, fears, and worries about trifles, and that is by establishing in yourselves increased self-control, tranquillity of mind, and harmony of nerve and body actionthat is to say, learn to control your thoughts as far as possible, learn to keep yourselves in a tranquil frame of mind in spite of adverse circumstances, and, above all, learn to keep your muscles, your limbs, and the whole attitude of the body in harmony with the source of nerve-energy upon which they rely. I strongly recommend each one of you who knows that she is daily wasting energy through being obsessed by petty annoyances and petty irritations, to make some such resolution as this, every morning on getting up and every night on going to bed: Realising how I have allowed my energy to be wasted by unnecessary angers, fears, and worries, I will stop this waste of force by establishing within myself a state of harmony. I will live harmony in every way, and thus acquire an increasing self-control. I will keep before me the ideal of harmony and tranquillity.

It is not difficult to make a very great change in one's Inner Life by determining to follow up such a resolution in the little things of daily life. There are plenty of things to practise on. The uncertainties of employment and the occurrence of minor ailments give you plenty of opportunities for practising self-control and endeavouring to build up a mental barrier which shall prevent your inner life being disturbed. I not infrequently tell business men that they can practise it on their clerks and the telephone, whilst ladies have ample opportunities of practising these things in connection with their servants. Do not think for a moment that I suggest that the very serious things of life should not ever awaken in us feelings of fear or anxiety. In the presence of infectious disease of a serious kind, at times of domestic or financial disaster, and in the face of death only those who have made mental and spiritual training an important part of their lives for many years can hope to be untouched.

But I repeat that, apart from these, it is the petty things of life which occasion so much unnecessary fear and worry, that make so many people morbid, that cause so much invalidism and kill so many before their time. In most of the instances in which people allow fear to sway them, careful inquiry will show that fear was groundless, and even when that is not the case, when some explanation is given it will invariably be found that the fear was useless.

I do not want you to imagine that I advise you to suppress anger, fear, and worry by an effort of will, but by thinking about them and realising their uselessness, that they are quite unnecessary under ordinary circumstances. Then you will simply drop them as you would drop any other bad habit. The trouble is that the world to-day is beset by petty anxieties, and the whole atmosphere is so charged with morbid suggestions and self-suggestions, bringing with them ideas of fear. There is a school of thought which teaches its pupils that they are not to worry—that is to say, that they are not to worry by suppressing their worries voluntarily. It is impossible to suppress worry and anxiety in this way. The more you try to fight it by an effort of will directed against it, the more it will bother you. The only way to get rid of worry is to realise the falseness of the basis upon which most worries are founded. It is by understanding and not by willing that you will triumph over these common energy-wasting thoughts, and in regard to them it is absolutely so, that the TRUTH shall set you free.

CHAPTER V

SELF-SUGGESTION IN THEORY

COCIETY little realises how it is daily controlled and moulded by self-suggestion in its members, an influence that has always swayed communities ever since those remote days when the first men gave up their solitariness and banded together for mutual defence and better success in their hunting forays. To-day the power of self-suggestion is at work in a thousand directions, one of which, its effects on health, particularly concerns us here. And it may be said at once that just as with direct suggestion from without, self-suggestion works more powerfully, if perhaps not more strangely, amongst masses of people than with individuals. Given certain conditions, self-suggestions of disease or of health will run through a community like wildfire; with the individual similar conditions must usually be intensified before the same sweeping results can be expected. And again as with suggestion the power of self-suggestion is often enough greater when the process is indirect and not direct: thus an invalid will perhaps benefit from a draught of which colour and taste are its chief properties, whilst receiving no help from the assurance of friend or doctor that health will improve. That is if he believes in the draught implicitly—as is not uncommonly the case—and rather doubts the power of the spoken word to heal.

For the success of suggestion or self-suggestion in healing, two conditions must be fulfilled—there must be the will to be well, and faith in the power of the process used. We are dealing with a commonplace of experience now; faith still moves mountains. But belief arrived at by cold reasoning will not suffice: the faith that heals is felt in the heart as well as known by the head. The faith that heals must have behind it what psychologists like to call a great "emotive dynamic": heart joins with head in accepting without a grain of doubt the self-suggestion.

Thus it is that self-suggestion practised in the study after much thought and applied with earnest intelligence fails time and again to the disappointment of many who feel that there is great power in the thing if only they know the magic formula which would release it. So it is again that selfsuggestion practised under the direction of particular persons is frequently very effective and seemingly all-powerful. Instruction from someone else-and especially from someone who is keen, experienced, and able to convey as can some the sense of confidence—has behind it the additional dynamic of the human touch. It is no longer a cold intellectual process, but is alive with the spirit of sympathy and help from without. Of course it cannot be gainsaid that here direct suggestion really comes to

the help of self-suggestion, but it is difficult to see how these can ever be quite separated, for even when instruction is taken from books the personality—and particularly the expressed desire to help—of the writer comes into play with forceful effect.

To attempt a definition it may be said that self-suggestion—as understood in practical work—is a process by which a (new) idea is taken up by the conscious mind of the "self-suggester" with such vigour that it is also accepted by the subconscious mind into which it becomes built and thereafter forms a part of the house of mental life. Such a definition, of course, assumes that the process is carried to its completion. Again, the idea need not necessarily be quite new, although it is always new in the sense that it comes with force and dominance for the first time.

When using self-suggestion, the two following laws of thought must be kept in view:

I. Two opposite ideas—suggestions—cannot be held in consciousness at one and the same time. Thus one cannot be afraid and be fearless (of the same circumstances) at one and the same time. Again, one is either conscious of ease or of discomfort: one cannot experience pain and be free from pain simultaneously. There can be no half and half sensation. It is not possible to think YES about a thing and at the same time think NO about it. Or, to put it another way, about a particular circumstance to

which our attention be turned there must be sooner or later a COMMANDING IDEA. This law indicates one of the keys to the successful practice of self-suggestion, and as soon as the student understands it he knows that he has got to work for all he is worth to make a "CURE IDEA" dominant in his mind. The ability readily to call an idea into a commanding position makes a man decided in thought, ready in action, and prominent in whatever position he occupies. To know what he wants and to make dominant the idea of DETERMINATION for example, carries a man in the battle of life.

The second important law is this:

2. Repetition makes sure. Just as drops of water dripping persistently will in time make an impression on the hardest rock, so will a suggestion repeated often enough impress even the most cynical. And remember, as has been noted in earlier chapters, there is a physical as well as mental reason for this. When we "think" there occurs a corresponding action in our brain-cells and brainfibres, and every time the same thought or idea is presented, more readily do these same cells and fibres work together. And so it is that by repetition the action of certain sets of brain-cells become automatic, and tracks are formed in the brain through which energy released by the ideas presented finds an outlet. This process is, indeed, the BASIS OF HABIT. Repetition wears a channel and sets going a machinery of habit: repetition fixes the habit. We all know how easy it is to form habits good and bad, and how difficult to alter them once formed. Students of advertisement are accustomed to run the law of repetition for all it is worth; whether they appreciate the psychology of their methods or not, the fact remains that they are fully aware of its practical implications.

Commonly, if one asks what is meant by selfsuggestion as a means of treatment it is answered that the method is to contradict to oneself whatever symptoms happen to be present. Thus, if one has a headache the idea is to say to oneself, "I have no pain in my head," "My headache is going, going-it has gone," or phrases of this kind. And, indeed, this is precisely the kind of thing that has been taught as the best method of self-suggestion by numerous exponents thereof. Self-treatment of this kind has been sufficiently expounded of late years to have brought it to the notice of most of my readers, some of whom have no doubt tried it. The method has its successes and may be applied to a few particular cases, but it is really very limited in its application.

I admit that a first acquaintance with psychotherapy, especially that form which depends on direct suggestion for its results, leads one to suppose that direct suggestions to self may be given on similar lines, but increased experience of the workings of the mind, and particularly of the mental causes of disease, show one that the direct self-

method is a crude one and falls far short of the ideal.

To take an example, in cases of sleeplessness the advocates of auto-suggestion on the direct lines indicated advise that at various times phrases devised to bring into the mind the certainty of sleep occurring nightly should be used. Many exponents of this kind of self-help plan out a sort of graduated scale of exercises, something like the following. In the morning the sufferer has to say to himself, "To-night I shall sleep soundly and well. I need have no fear as to my not sleeping in future. I know I shall sleep well now. Most certainly I shall sleep well to-night. I shall sleep soundly to-night." Then during the day similar mental exercises have to be gone through, more and more stress being placed on the idea, "I most certainly shall sleep to-night." Or, "I shall always sleep well now." Whilst at night the victim of insomnia is instructed to go to bed in the usual way, and, having composed himself comfortably, to whisper to himself such phrases as, "Sleep is coming. I am very tired. Sleep is not far away. In a few moments I shall be soundly asleep. Asleep, asleep, asleep," and to keep this up until the desired result is brought about. In some cases where the sleeplessness is due to a not very important cause, relief can doubtless be obtained in this way, but I have always found that a large proportion of those who attempt the method are actually made

more wakeful by it! In days when we understood little about the influence of Mind as a curative agent, the use of this kind of auto-suggestion served a fairly useful purpose, but now we can make use of a far better method, as I shall proceed to show.

It is, of course, a rational thing to combat a morbid idea by a corresponding healthy idea, and no one has more respect for the "cure idea" than I have. But that is not the same thing as treating physical results by ideas directly referable to those results, as I have previously pointed out. To make my meaning clear, I will take one or two more examples. For instance, let us consider one of those numerous cases in which an individual is tormented by some obsessing thought or fear, such as persistent want of self-confidence; one of those cases in which interviews are shirked, social engagements put off, and a life of increasing seclusion led because the thought of nervousness betrayed by flushing of the face, or hesitancy of manner, is always present. Here there is a morbid self-suggestion in possession, a suggestion represented by the idea of want of self-control. Here the cause is patently a mental one, and the disorder for the most part a mental one also. Now, as I have said, it is a very rational thing to combat a morbid idea with a healthy "cure idea," and in troubles of the type now under notice much good can be done by self-suggestion of self-control. And by persisting with self-help on these lines after a plan to be outlined subsequently, the nervousness and unhappy feelings may be quite driven away.

But supposing the morbidity of mind has progressed so far that the unfortunate victim of this nervousness has shut himself off from practically all contact with his fellow-creatures, and in his misery developed physical results, such as "rheumatic" pains or indigestion, or physical cravings for alcohol and drugs let us suppose, then the case presents itself to view as one of rheumatism or dyspepsia Then, according to the orthodox method of autosuggestion, the invalid should be told to say to himself, "I have no pain," or "My pain is leaving me. The pains are becoming less and less. They are leaving me altogether. To-morrow they will have gone." And similarly to repeat phrases to the effect that the indigestion is not so bad—is going—that the stomach can now digest, and so forth. Where there is, or follows, development of great will-power, possibly some good may be obtained by this, but such self-suggestions are bound to fail in the majority of cases. This is not merely a theoretical consideration, but a matter of practical observation.

On the other hand, if by careful mental analysis we ascertain that it was a feeling of unworthiness, of want of self-confidence, backed up by a constant fear of "giving oneself away" that was the beginning of the illness, then we shall know that the only rational way to deal with the condition

psychically will be to implant suggestions or selfsuggestions tending to increase self-control and confidence, which will break through the morbid mental shell which has covered up the personality of the invalid and shut him up with his miseries. I repeat that where there is great will-power, and it can by training be concentrated on the offending morbid mental attitude, then relief can be obtained by either concentration of will or by strong direct self-suggestions which are even made to attack the physical results. There are not a few who hold that the ideal of self-development is to acquire such a control over the whole body that the different organs will obey the wishes of the higher self on all occasions. That one shall say to the stomach "digest," to the heart "be tranquil," and to the brain "sleep"—and it shall be so. It is quite obvious that this ideal ambition is to some extent a worthy one, and that it is possible to train the will-power so that really remarkable control can be obtained. But in all things let us be practical and understand that the circumstances of daily life do not permit everyone to attain this stage of will-development. Nor is it necessary to do so, as it is unquestionable that the attainment of a perfect balance of mind and body, an inner harmony of life, will do far more for health than any undue prowess of sheer will. Certainly a strong will, to use a familiar expression, is desirable to obtain the best results of self-development; but, after all, it is

not so much a matter of strength as of poise that makes for power in "willing." No amount of will-power can help to rid us from ill-health if it is clumsily directed, and what appears to be an excessive development of will is really a matter of balance, of poise, of harmony, after all. As a matter of fact the will in us—the higher self—is probably potentially strong enough for all requirements at the outset, but through careless use of its forces fails to accomplish all it might at later times of life.

Again, the will may serve to distract attention from physical symptoms, such as pain, and so bring about an apparent cure by direct self-suggestion, but it is only a makeshift way of obtaining an uncertain relief.

Where actual physical results are in question—pain, indigestion, sleeplessness, constipation, weakness of limbs, and so forth—then the direct self-suggestion method of treating by negations or contradictions, successful as it may be on occasion, is a poor one, and is not based on a sound understanding of the principles of the interaction of Mind and Body. On the other hand, it may be used with advantage where the condition for which relief is sought is for the most part expressed mentally.

The practical point is, then, that to get really good results self-suggestion must be directed to mental causes and not physical results, so that

an order of mental exercises quite different from that already considered has to be understood before progress can be made on the right lines. Obviously it is a very easy thing to draw up formulæ for selfsuggestions, denials, and declarations where physical expressions of disease are being thought of. For a bad irritating cough one says, "My cough is less than it was. It is leaving me. My system is too strong for this illness; it is throwing it off. My breathing is easier than it was." Or one may even make the astonishing denials and affirmations advocated by some self-help systems, in which case the invalid would say boldly, "I have no cough. My breathing is easy and normal." And this irrespective of the fact that the exercise is interrupted by paroxysms of coughing! I suppose it is because of the germ of truth which underlies such absurdities that people, realising this germ, persist in their adhesion to the systems that advise them.

And on the same lines it would not be difficult to make out mental exercises for any other illness from gout to headache, or from nerves to influenza, quite irrespective of suitability or unsuitability, quite independently of the actual needs and deficiencies that are present, mentally or physically!

But, on the other hand, it is not always easy to formulate the *right exercises* for self-suggestion in special instances. For having agreed that it is the mental causes of disease that must be mentally attacked, it follows that in any individual case

it is absolutely necessary to define what those mental causes are before we can formulate selfhelp exercises. The task of mental diagnosis of this kind is sometimes fairly easy. Often, indeed, the victim of ill-health is himself aware of the mental attitude which has caused or aggravated his complaint, although perhaps unwilling to own the truth. But oft-times the cause is buried deep in the mind where subconsciously it rankles and irritates until the whole system has been thrown into the disharmony which is disease. Consequently not only is an understanding of the influence of mind in the production of ill-health essential before Mental Self-Help can be undertaken, but also some knowledge of the directions in which the fault may be looked for.

When anyone definitely looks for mental causes it is often found that certain circumstances can quickly be noted as being most likely to have led to mental attitudes unfavourable to health. Or those attitudes themselves may at once be recognised as being at the root of various troubles. Unfortunately, when the lamp of mental science and psychology is turned inwards, people frequently do not like what they see, and endeavour to deceive themselves as to the truth. Of course, if this be done no self-help, or even help from without, can avail. In the ideal forms of psychic treatment there can be no deception. The sufferer must be perfectly candid with himself or with his mentor.

And it is in connection with this task of mentally gripping himself that development of will-power and self-mastery by concentration and exercise of inhibition, as outlined in an earlier chapter, can give great assistance. Determination to be perfectly fearless whatever self-analysis reveals is essential to a beginning of progress on the Mental Way. Carelessness of the Inner Life so readily leads to the growth of forces that range themselves on the side of ill, that the average individual who has not had the advantage of any mental or spiritual training on the right lines—or having had it has neglected or overlooked the higher teachings and principles of being—must expect to find himself possessed of mental devils.

It is the mental devils of evil passion, hatred, jealousy, anger, fear, selfishness, and their like that lead to the morbid outlook on life that depresses the physical system and paves the way for ill-health, not only expressed in terms of mind and "nerves," but of body, as I have already shown. And it is these same mental devils whose presence people will not acknowledge if they can help it, until they realise that they must be recognised before they can be dislodged. The prayer for deliverance from evil and uncharitable thoughts has a deeper and more practical significance than most people realise.

The modern science of psycho-analysis in which some sections of the medical world have lately been very interested, has helped in its more reasonable aspects by showing how an old disturbance of the Inner Self, or long-buried—" suppressed " morbid idea, can lead to persistent ill-health; and also that dislodgment of the mental irritant and tranquillising of the disturbed mind can bring about restored health. Obsessions, fears, nervous habits, bad dreams, and other nervous symptoms have been cured by an analysis of mental life which has revealed the presence of some long-forgotten. morbid thought or passion, traces of which have remained buried for years. The methods of psychoanalysis as carried out in the psychological laboratory are long and tedious. But mind analysis can be carried out to a very useful extent by an intelligent individual who has acquainted himself with the main facts of the relation between mind and health. Sometimes it is found impossible to find any mental attitude or happening which may fairly be pointed to as the looked-for cause of illhealth, and in such cases outside help must obviously be sought. There is, however, little doubt that the person who courageously and conscientiously examines himself, and relentlessly puts his finger on his mental faults, is more likely to make rapid progress on the Mental Way than he who is fearful, and, shrinking from self-analysis, turns elsewhere for assistance.

It must be borne in mind at the same time that there must be nothing morbid in this self-analysis, which must be carried out fearlessly and impartially. There is quite enough ill-health due to habits of morbid self-introspection without it being desirable to risk an increase of these by any mistaken notions of self-analysis. The individual who is always examining himself for supposed faults for which he further abases himself mentally is on the wrong track. And I do not hesitate to say that such an one is often a victim to a mistaken system of religious self-abasement which is really founded on the encouragement of evil rather than of good. Progress towards better things and towards an ideal healthy relationship of Body, Mind, and Spirit is not to be attained through morbid selfabasement at every available opportunity. Humility is a golden attribute and the realisation of the Inner Life and its possibilities is incompatible with any mental attitude in which humility does not find place. But mental and spiritual selfdevelopment do not depend on mental self-abasement. The attitude of the over-sensitive person who encourages ideas of his own unworthiness is wrong, and causes him mentally to face the downward path which may lead to an institution for those who have lost their balance of mind altogether. Self-analysis must be for purposes of revealing in what directions development is mostly required, and not for purposes of self-revilement. It is not uncommon to be told by persons who are sick of soul that they are damned and lost spiritually.

They realise their own deficiencies and apply to themselves the harsh rule of some sectarian religion, and become victims of the self-suggestions that they are beyond all hope of help either in this world or the next. As I always point out, they have not the slightest authority for condemning any human creature to lasting misery in any world, and certainly not the right of self-trial and condemnation of their own personalities in this world. The morbid thoroughness of some of these unhappy persons would be ludicrous were it not so cruel, and likely to be so tragic in its consequences. The morbid outlook that leads to religious insanity is commonly one that has minimised the great message of Hope which is to be found always in the highest expressions of spiritual teaching.

I repeat, then, that self-analysis is the first step to mental self-help in ill-health, but that it must be undertaken solely with the view of strengthening weak defences against disease-bearing morbidities, and of assisting the Inner Self in the constant struggle which it has to maintain through the mind against material circumstances throughout its mysterious entanglement on this plane. When mental habits and undesirable attitudes are revealed time must not be lost in vain regrets. "Let the dead past bury its dead." Let future self-development be the main occupation and consideration then. It is certain that the rewards and joys of progress along the Mental Way, however much of

a struggle it be at first, will be of a more satisfying order than any that can be obtained by persistence in wrong mental attitudes which must inevitably lead to miseries of ill-health, torment enough in themselves. The reward is there, and no reason why everyone should not make a bid for it.

CHAPTER VI

SELF-SUGGESTION IN PRACTICE

NE of the first steps then in mental self-help is to answer the question, "What is the need that has to be met?" Inquiring into this by asking, for example:

Am I in too much of a hurry about things?

Do I lack self-control?

Am I selfish?

Are my thoughts too much centred on myself?

Am I lacking in courage?

Is my need a greater self-confidence?

Am I under the rule of fear-thought?

Is worrying about trifles my weak point?

When a mental diagnosis has been made the next step is to decide the form of assistance or self-help that will most quickly go to the root of the matter. The false idea or unhealthy self-suggestion that is obstructing health must be counteracted, and if possible driven right out of both consciousness and subconsciousness. Thus we shall not rely on a repetition of stock phrases or well-worn auto-suggestions, but deal with the matter scientifically as cause and effect, the difficulties of each individual requiring careful sympathetic study. Let me point out once again that this method of attacking ill-health is not

immediately concerned with those physical results usually thought of as the "disease" which has to be treated; these when they have reached a certain stage are outside the scope of mental self-helpin our present stage of understanding that is-and must be left to the doctor. From the point of view of self-suggestion we may well briefly review our stock of mental remedies, just as in the consulting room or dispensary one can take stock of instruments and drugs. As with the latter so with our suggestions and self-suggestions it is found that some are being required almost every day, others a few hours each week, whilst there are quite a few which are kept in reserve and only used occasionally. Moreover, there are some of which the effects and dosages remain uncertain.

It is a commonplace of daily life that all ideas of a depressing kind are detrimental to health and hinder recovery, whilst, on the other hand, even in incurable disease words of hope and encouragement are enormously helpful. In a word — whilst NEGATIVE — pessimistic — thoughts depress both mind and body, obstruct the free flow of our vital forces, whilst in addition they impede the action of drugs, retard the success of operations and generally bar the road to health. POSITIVE — optimistic — thoughts open the whole system to the more rapid action of healing forces, assisting medicines, aiding the surgeon, and promoting the good effects of any other physical

treatment which is being carried out such as electricity, massage, or remedial exercises.

Hence I say emphatically that just as you endeavour to assist routine medical or surgical treatment by due regard for general health rules, so much you pay ample attention to Right Thinking—that is, you must, if you wish to get well in the quickest possible way, see to it that there is nothing in your Thoughts to hinder recovery.

When you have had an attack of influenza do you shut yourself up in airless, ill-ventilated rooms? Do you sit down and let the muscles grow flabby and the internal organs get out of sorts? No; you endeavour to obtain as much fresh air, and to take as much brisk exercise as you can.

Similarly you should not let the mind get poisoned by morbid thoughts, or become unhealthy for want of proper healthy exercise. It is your duty to yourself and all about you to keep alive and active thoughts of:

CONFIDENCE, DETERMINATION, STRENGTH, AND HEALTH.

Fill the mind with Positive Thoughts and the restorative powers that bring back health will get their work done in the minimum time. Thoughts and ideas that are health-giving particularly include all that "suggest" to us Courage, Confidence, Determination, Hope, Patience, Love, Peace, Faith. The Apostle Paul stated the case once for

always when he wrote: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

In the chapter on self-control and how we waste our energies numerous instances of nervous tension and want of self-mastery were discussed, and the right way to regain control was indicated. All work done in this way really exemplifies the practice of self-suggestion in that it is the thought of

"I CAN AND I WILL"

that is gradually built into the individual's mental make-up, and these form a foundation-stone.

MAN HAS THE POWER TO WILL: MAN HAS THE POWER TO ACT:

here are other strong self-suggestions that are implied in all efforts at increasing self-mastery. I have been astonished at what they can do for some who have lost grip on themselves and come to such a pass that they are drifting about in the clutches of nervousness, bad habits, fearfulness, and so forth without seemingly being any longer able to pull themselves together.

To illustrate further the scientific—that is after all the common-sense—practice of self-suggestion

¹ Philippians iv. 8.

I will take some other examples, such as stammering, alcoholism, the cigarette habit, all of which offer particularly hopeful opportunities for self-help.

As to the first named it may be remembered that a variety of faulty mental attitudes lead to stammering, but perhaps the most usual is an idea of selfweakness, backed up by a steadily growing morbid self-suggestion of helplessness. Indeed, very often it is this latter that forms the chief stumbling-block in our way of assisting stammerers. Self-control of muscles of speech and of breathing may be developed fairly readily perhaps, but the firmly rooted idea that the condition is chronic, incurable, or inherited is frequently very difficult to get rid of. When a person has been telling himself for years that he can never speak properly, that "Uncle Somebody or Grandfather Somebody was a stammerer, and that therefore it is a hopeless family condition," he has built up a splendid shell of morbid self-suggestion which only can give freedom from Ideas of harmony, self-confidence, and their kind are valuable in all instances of stammering, whilst they should, of course, be aided by self-suggestions aimed at special weak points wherever they may be discovered. The following directions may serve as examples of the steps to be taken by stammerers, always, of course, where there is no actual paralysis or mechanical obstruction that must first be dealt with from another point of view:-

- I. Keep before you the mental picture of yourself speaking normally and easily. Realise the possibility of your doing so. Realise this not as a pleasant dream, but as an immediate possibility capable of speedy fulfilment.
- 2. Keep in mind the same mental picture in special reference to positions known to have been difficult on previous occasions.
- 3. Develop your poise and self-control by habitually controlling yourself in little things, such as the number of cigarettes you shall smoke, the time you shall get up or go to bed, as well as by carrying out exercises of concentration and attention, all of which increase will-power.
- 4. Similarly avoid all undue haste of thought and action, keeping a firm watch on yourself all the time. Make a point of thinking before speaking, and then of speaking slowly and with full consideration.
- 5. Mentally saturate yourself with the ideas of harmony and self-control. Live these ideas in every way you can think of.
 - 6. Make use of such declarations as:
 - "I will attain harmony of mind and body."
 - "I am a centre of mental power, and will control that power at will."
 - "I realise my developing self-confidence."
 (These declarations should be said aloud, written out, and thought of frequently.)

7. When you are in circumstances which experience has taught you are adverse to your proper speaking—when suddenly confronted by strangers, for example—use your will-power to call up the ideas of harmony and self-control, and actually say them mentally—to yourself, that is. At the same time give physical expression to these ideas by maintaining an attitude of body that is at ease, restful, and free from strain or any undue muscular tension. (N.B.—Many stammerers express their tense mental states by their uncomfortable tense physical attitudes.)

BAD HABITS.—Where some undesirable habit has gained the upper hand, such as cigarette smoking to excess, or the more tragic tendencies to drugs and alcohol, the chief obstacle to recovery is the difficulty of getting the victim to formulate with any power the thoughts and self-suggestions that can enable him to regain lost position and selfrespect. By a gradual process of yielding to temptation the power of inhibition has become so weak that it cannot be made to respond to the frantic efforts the eclipsed self makes upon it when all seems to be lost. In such cases the only thing to do is to instil the unfortunate individual with suggestions of inner strength and growing willpower, telling him to realise himself as a centre of mental power that an effort may yet bring back into the control of the higher self. In simple cases of these terrible afflictions people can well help themselves if shown the way, but where drugs or alcohol have actually obtained a firm hold, outside help is nearly always needed, so that the worst cases do not really come within the scope of this book.

The cigarette habit, on the other hand, has not the dread potentialities of morphia and alcohol or their fellows, and should in every instance come within the power of Mental Self-Help. Such a failing may be attacked as follows: Ask yourself the question, "Why do I smoke so much?" Then examine your inward self and mental life to find out in what way smoking supports you. It is certain that some satisfaction of a very definite kind is derived from the habit, or you would not spend time and money in the consumption of innumerable cigarettes. Certainly the actual physical habit has now to be considered just as a habit. But the physical habit in this instance has really little hold, neither has the so-called craving. It is the mental condition behind that gives the habit its power. Very often it will be found as a result of self-examination that some feeling of want of confidence is present which is minimised when a cigarette is being held between the lips or being waved about in the air. Or there may be a sense of nervous irritation, more pronounced when work is heavy, that yields to the soothing influence of the fragrant weed. The pleasant sense of rhythm given by the drawing in and sending out of the smoke has a tranquillising effect on tired nerves, added to which is the sedative suggestion conveyed by its odour. Smoking of good tobacco always suggests ideas of rest and luxury, and it is the mental effect that has far more hold than any direct physical consequence in most instances. Hence, if one can pick out some such need as those indicated, and can satisfy it in some other way, the smoking will no longer be required, and must necessarily lose its hold on the individual concerned. Thus exercises that bring about harmony of mind will again be found useful, whilst at the same time all exercises that tend to strengthen inhibition and powers of self-forbidding will here be extremely important.

I want to make it quite clear that whilst at a certain point it is a meritorious thing to stop this, or any other bad habit by sheer force of will, this is inadvisable unless the mental state be readjusted also. The ideal aimed at is to order the whole system so that cigarettes are no longer desired, that apart from the slight hold of a mere habit of hands and lips, the habit has lost its point, so to say. If this mental readjustment be not carried out, however much the undesired habit be suppressed by will, the underlying causes will still remain and wait their chance to again overcome the self-will. It is for this reason that people so often can boast of having suppressed a habit by force of will, but at the same time they have to confess that they have to entirely do without the smoke, or drink, or whatever it may be, as on the slightest indulgence they feel they must yield once more to the old habit. Where causes have been mentally combated this cannot occur, and having freed himself from these, the hitherto victim of the tobacco habit, for example, can smoke none or one or two or ten cigarettes without fearing lest he shall fall back into former ways. He has, in short, attained self-mastery in this particular direction. This is a different thing from living, as it were, over a "habit-volcano" which may take one unawares at any moment.

In all these things perseverance is required, and the morbid self-suggestions that have held the field for years cannot always be overcome in a few days.

In concluding this chapter I must give a few words of advice about the actual carrying out of daily mental exercises. In the first place, all verbal declarations must be made with power. It is not the slightest use gabbling off a few sentences in a hurried, thoughtless manner. A statement made to another person in a hasty, unimportant way will surely not impress him. If you want to impress your friend you speak to him words of power. That is, each word is spoken carefully, considerately, and with mental power behind it. Thus also must you address yourself. Make your declarations with power, and you will derive, immense benefit from them.

Then, again, never carry out any self-help exercise in a hurry. Decide upon the time that you will carry it out each day or even twice a day—then stick to it. Choose times that you know will be free, and keep to the same times daily. Under no circumstances be interrupted or expect inter-

ruption. To attempt exercises when an appointment has to be thought of, or a train to be caught, is to start with a disturbing current of subconscious thought that will prevent any marked benefit being obtained.

It is a good plan to mark your declarations by the physical movement of placing your right hand on the head when speaking, or uplifting it as if declaiming to an audience.

When you come to carry out a meditation it is a good thing to prepare the way by one or two preliminary sittings in which a relaxed state of mind (to use a convenient expression) is to be obtained. If you have never carried out a meditation this should be done daily for the first three days as follows: Sit in a comfortable chair with head-rest, and proceed as if you were going to perform the relaxation exercise previously described. But instead of aiming at complete relaxation, merely secure a general slack state of the whole body without making any particular effort. Then close the eyes and let the thoughts wander where they will. Before letting yourself go, as it were, determine how long you will remain in this passive state—five or ten minutes is a good time. Where there is not already a tendency to dreaminess as much as half an hour's rest of this kind may be indulged in. The encouragement of a habit of daydreaming which is out of control is greatly to be deprecated. If you do not rouse at the end of the period determined upon, that is to say, if your subconscious mind fails to recall you to ordinary conditions, then arrange to have a striking clock or some other device to rouse you. It is undesirable to remain too long in a dreamy state.

When you then come to carry out definite self-suggestions and exercises you should first of all say aloud your formula, then repeat it mentally, and finish by meditating on it. If now after a few moments your thoughts wander it does not matter. Your Inner Self is now occupied with the matter you have put before it, and subconsciously the suggestions and declarations will act. A great part of the work done by self-suggestions, as with all suggestions, is done subconsciously.

It is a good plan to meditate not only on long sentences but on simple words, thus—Strength, Love, Wisdom, Courage, Perseverance, Contentment, Peace, Unselfishness; and simple phrases, such as—"Perfect love casteth out fear," "All things work towards good," "The Truth shall set you free." These all have their uses, and greatly help in various instances.

Never think of physical diseases in your exercises, nor of symptoms; neither attempt to relieve local conditions of gross disease by a mistaken idea of "concentrating" on it. Combat mental morbidities, and let thoughts and ideas that are good, pure, and beautiful—things that are lovely and of good report—saturate your mind.

CHAPTER VII

RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING

I T has just been shown that in self-suggestion we have a really practical process of influencing ourselves for better health both of mind and body, a process that has the merit of being founded on sound principles. By repetition and confidence we can, as it were, impress ideas on our minds so that they become part of our mental make-up, and, of course, according to their nature alter the trend of our thought and feeling about particular things: confidence, determination, or courage, for example, can be substituted for indecision and fear with great advantage. Moreover, it has been shown how consciously expressed thoughts-ideas, suggestions, or self-suggestions—not only become absorbed into the "subconscious mind," but through the mutual interaction between mind and brain, and between brain and body influence the human machine in its many departments. Moreover, all these things have been discussed as desirable ends to be reached by the practice of various exercises: in other words, as a method of psychological medicine in which the self-suggestions used correspond to the drugs of materia medica. Then just as one gives up physical remedies when they have done their work so it is inferred that in the ordinary use of self-suggestion

the mental exercises are given up when the immediate need has been satisfied. This is quite well as far as it goes, and self-suggestion can be regarded just as a useful form of self-help to be practised when need arises and set aside when it has fulfilled the call made upon it. But self-suggestion has, indeed, far wider implications and possibilities than are indicated by this limited use of it. Error creeps in if we regard thought-changing and thought-control as nothing more than useful aids in time of illness. Indeed, seen in its true light, thought-control appears not only as a method of obtaining a truer expression of health, but as a means for realising more fully power and prosperity, and above all as giving expression to a philosophy of life that can give spiritual strength, peace of mind, and happiness. In a word, we can use the principle of self-suggestion to change our whole mental outlook and to maintain an attitude towards life which not only persistently helps us in matters of health, but uplifts us spiritually day by day.

Whatever theories of life, creation, and man's place in the universe we may hold, the fact that for the individual life is after all *primarily* mental, and *secondarily* physical, stands out clearly enough. That is to say, it stands out clearly when one gives a little attention to the matter and refuses to be deceived by appearances.

I think—therefore I know that I AM.

How else could I arrive at any sense of existence?

Without the faculty of mental perception I can have no knowledge of living at all.

Through Mind I know: without Mind I am nothing.

My appreciation of relatives, friends, dear ones, depends entirely on Mind: my regard or disregard is mental.

The state of my mind colours the life about me: health, happiness, prospects, and prosperity are all influenced by it.

Even though conditions of body influence my mind at any given time, and I am unable by force of will or understanding to correct this influence, the fact remains that my reaction to the world about me is essentially a mental reaction.

Through Mind I know my friends: through Mind they know me. My reaction to them is mental: their reaction to me is mental.

Further, my knowledge of God is only gained through Mind: my sense of the presence of God is mental.

And so the existence of me, as a Self, and in relation to God and my fellow-man is a phenomenon of mental perception: it is in Mind and can have no other being.

To each of us the happiness of family life; the communion of friends; the reactions of our daily work are in Mind—primarily.

To each of us religion, art, morals, means this or that according to the constitution of our minds—

according to the kind of pattern formed by the mosaic of our separate thoughts—conscious and subconscious.

Hence in the control and change of thought lies our great practical opportunity of making readjustments of ourselves to persons and conditions around us that mean just everything that matters in daily life. We can think RIGHTLY and we can think WRONGLY: and if the mechanism of will has failed, we can get others to think rightly for us.

But what is Right-thinking and what is Wrongthinking? I write well knowing that to many persons to-day these terms stand for fairly definite things and I use them throughout this chapter in the sense that is familiar to all followers of "right-thinking" literature. Of course the terms themselves at once suggest a standard to be followed, and it is this standard which must be carefully considered. The student of mental self-help at once requires a guide as to what thoughts he may encourage and dwell on as being "right," and what ideas are to be avoided and got rid of as being "wrong." And at once it may be said that from the purely psychological point of view ideas that are right include all that suggest: Hope-Confidence-Strength-Courage—Determination—Health—Optimism—Peace -Love. Whilst those that are wrong suggest: despair — doubt — weakness — fear — slackness — disease pessimism-unrest-hatred.

And it is possible to effect great changes in health

and outlook by using the "right ideas" as selfsuggestions on lines previously indicated. But when all is said and done this is an intellectual process in which the standard is one of expediency only. Because science has shown certain kinds of thoughts to be health-giving and others harmful, we decide to dwell on the former and exclude the latter. It is a process of the head and not of the heart and lacks the emotive dynamic—the power of the spirit -which is the moving force in "right-thinking" as practised by many thousands to-day who take it far beyond the boundaries of a psychological problem and make it what is really a matter of daily religious usage. Here the standard is not one of expediency, but based on an ideal, and this ideal is nothing less than Man's highest conception of God and His influence in the world.

Here one is encouraged to think "rightly"—in a certain way that is—because it is believed that the more nearly we can bring our thought into line with Divine Thought the greater influence for good shall we have in general, and for health in particular. There can be no higher standard—one can want no higher ideal. Clearly it cannot be followed without Faith—and it is just because Faith comes into it that the power of right-thinking on these lines can still work miracles of healing. Faith does wonders even when its object is lowly, but there are no wonders equal to those wrought about by Faith in a God of Love and Truth and Beauty.

Right-thinking, then, in its fullest development is an attempt to follow that thought which we may well regard as Divine, and our knowledge of what is Divine Thought comes to us partly from within—through our own instinctive feeling: partly from without in the writings and sayings of the great spiritual Teachers whose lives have illuminated era after era throughout history. Greatsouled men grappling with the problems of suffering and sickness and death in the dawning days of civilisation have handed on the lamp of Truth one to the other, until, finally, the teaching of Jesus came as a still greater light in the darkness that confined men's thought. Then His great expounder, Paul, inspired by the good news, endeavoured to systematise the wonderful truths he had grasped himself for the benefit of those so dazzled that they could not see, and for some so deaf that they would not hear.

The keynote of Right-thinking is so to control our thoughts that the following propositions are continually held—that we habitually hold on to the truths of being—and that whenever our Faith seems weak we make a great effort to get back to the solid foundation of belief, that God is and exists as a Great Intelligence—as, indeed, CREATIVE MIND: that He is the very foundation of the Universe which is primarily a mental creation and has its essential existence in Mind and not Matter: that He is Principle universally, and Person only when

envisaged by limited human understanding: that as Principle He is expressed and seeks expression as Love, Truth, and Beauty: that, indeed, whenever we see these three fundamentals manifested there we actually see the working of God: that as Divine Mind or Principle He is EVER PRESENT.

It clears the way to an understanding of these propositions if we:

- r. Rid ourselves of the conception of God as a kind of super-man in human form, and with human caprices: who in spite of our ignorance may drop on us heavily for breaking a law which we have never had explained to us: rid ourselves, that is, of the idea of a stern tribal god who is wrathful and hard to please: free ourselves from what has well been termed the Sultanic idea of God.
- 2. Accustom ourselves to the thought that Principle is sure and unchanging: that Principle is certain in application to all our problems and will ndeed solve them the more readily the more we understand what this implies.
- 3. Realise that by this thought one is following the evolution of the idea of God as it occurs in the Bible.
- 4 Understand that although we may thus lessen the admittedly comforting idea of human Father-Child relationship, we are accepting a far higher spiritual communion between God and ourselves.

But the religious aspects of Right-thinking cannot be discussed at length here where I am mainly concerned with a statement of ideas which form its foundation and on which a really strong House of Mental Life can be built.

As a practical matter it comes to this, that we have to drive these ideas home by a process of self-suggestion, although no self-suggestion will suffice for those who cannot accept the propositions given—for those, indeed, who have no Faith in the scientific conception of God. We have continually to be on the look out for thoughts turning us in the wrong direction.

If we believe in Principle—manifesting as Good, Love, Truth, and Beauty—we cannot hold thoughts of Fear, Doubt, Anxiety, or Anger: in a word, if we hold fast to Principle we consolidate all those ideas which are health-giving: we turn out all those which are depressing and favouring disease.

This corresponds absolutely with the teaching of Jesus Who spoke of God as the Power (Principle) at hand—always ready to solve our problems if we turn to Him: always on the side of Love, Health, and Joy; this is the great Truth that He spoke of when He said, "Ye shall know the Truth—and the Truth shall make you free." Paul said, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." Right-thinking on scientific lines is a method that has been proved by many, and can be proved for each individual by himself or by herself. Certainly once proved it will be held fast to.

The great mental enemy to be overcome by all

who seek better health through self-suggestion and right-thinking is fear, which is the root of much sickness. As has been shown previously:

FEAR-

Makes miserable our outlook;

Depresses the circulation—and organic functions generally;

Hinders life processes;

Opens the way to disease;

Hinders recovery—obstructs the action of physical remedies.

CONFIDENCE AND COURAGE, on the other hand—

Brighten our outlook;

Quicken the circulation and all the vital processes of the body;

Strengthen our defences against disease;

Favour recovery and help the action of all remedies.

"Perfect love casteth out fear." And so the time-honoured text is found after all to be in harmony with a reaction of human mind that makes for health.

The practice of Right-thinking, then, resolves itself into:

1. Keeping a constant watch upon our thoughts: accepting the "right," rejecting the "wrong."

- 2. Persistently turning them round in the right direction: turning to the light and away from the darkness.
- 3. And as persistently to this end we may press into our service: every text; every poem; every quotation; every saying; every work of art pointing in the right direction—that we may come across. It is well to keep a book in which notes of these are entered from time to time.

By conscious effort we steadily and persistently mould the unconscious self within us more and more into the form of that Ideal which we believe and feel to be Man made in God's own Image. The reflection of the unconscious in our consciousness is our present reward, manifesting not only in greater peace of mind but in better health.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

M Y summing up of the chief points in the practice of Mental Self-help will, I think, be most helpful if put in the form of brief notes, each of which contains a thought or thoughts about important phases of our problem. It is not my intention to summarise theories of mind-action, seeing that my present endeavour is to help those seeking aid to get away from the dead letter of discussion and come into contact with the living spirit of experience. There are many things difficult to explain in mental self-treatment as in all other phases of the mind-healing question, but there are also many things of great practical value upon which we can rely implicitly. No explanation of such things as Mind, Life, Eternal Energy, Vital Force, Will, Chance, Faith, Love, and Beauty, for example, has ever been given that satisfies all, and it is greatly deplored that so much time is wasted and bitter thought loosed in wranglings on the great problems of our Being, when the quickest way of progress must surely be found in the seeking of common ground for all. We are all students of Life and Health: let us meet on common ground whenever possible and devote our strength and time to bringing together the facts of experience gathered in many places. Physician and psychologist: mind-healer and psycho-analyst: suggestionist and healer through prayer: priest and layman—let us all contribute our findings to the common store of knowledge, endeavouring to harmonise those things which we have proved and hold fast to, without ever encouraging those differences of opinion which grow so soon into antagonisms. Let us seek each his neighbour's good.

The object of this book is not to lead people to desert their doctors for self-treatment, but to help them obtain a means of support which shall be of great assistance in times of sickness and mental distress.

Considering how much illness is dependent on mental causes not difficult to reach—fears, suppressions, and the like—more general efforts should be made to show invalids how they can be helped through mind as well as through matter.

* * *

The value of self-help or treatment through mind is not lessened because mental methods cannot accomplish everything in the present state of our knowledge and experience. Acute illness is for the most part beyond the reach of methods of mental self-help and mind-treatment, but nevertheless the practice of these even in acute illness makes for the assistance of medicine and surgery.

* * *

The enthusiastic student of mental self-help should never feel piqued at leaving routine treatment in the hands of a medical man: a mind cause may initiate ill-health, but the results may be far outside the scope of mental healing. Worry and grief may lower health until appendicitis or some other acute crisis occurs, but the work to be done will almost certainly call for skilled medical attention.

* * *

The wise physician will not discourage help through mind or prayer, always provided nothing is done to hinder the doctor in dealing with the urgent physical calls made upon him.

* * *

Understanding of the ways in which anger, fear, and worry predispose to ill-health and actually lead to disease assists us in prescribing mental remedies in particular instances.

* * *

In marking off the physical from the mental way to recovery of health we must not mistake

the purely psychological route for the spiritual way through which mankind can obtain the greatest benefits of all.

* * *

Let us remember that Man, even at his highest level, has so far touched no more than the fringe of the spiritual.

* * *

Faith and the freeing of the spirit still works miracles of healing.

* * *

Self-training is a key to increased well-being of mind and body.

* * *

Control of thought may be sought just for the purpose of obtaining better health, but it has a far higher value when practised to the end that by individual upliftment each of us may add a little to the sum-total of human betterment and happiness.

* * *

The Self must become master in its own house to the glory of God: not from any motive of selfseeking, self-glorification, or self-pride.

* * *

Seek to overcome all dark thoughts and to make right all wrong-thinking, knowing that by so doing you are actually helping everyone else who is striving to reach the same goal.

* * *

Man cannot stand alone, nor can he be sustained by barren formulæ or words without weight in the hour of darkness. Without Faith in the triumph of Good—as Principle—he will inevitably fall.

* * *

When you fill your mind with right ideas—when you persistently replace fear, malice, and uncharitableness by love, faith, and charity—you do, indeed, pray.

* * *

The more numerous the army of those who oppose mental attitudes and false beliefs that chain us in misery and ill-health, the nearer do we fulfil Tennyson's ideal:

". . . thus the whole round earth is everywhere Bound by golden chains about the feet of God."

* * *

That anger, fear, worry, and their companions are nowadays becoming more and more recognised as disease-bearers is evidenced by the place given to them in modern works on medicine. A careful search through some of the latest and most authoritative medical works has shown that the emotions are believed by various well-known authorities

not infrequently to play an important part in the causation of the following, in addition to numerous special mental and nervous diseases—consumption and tuberculosis in general; anæmia, both the simple anæmia or chlorosis of young women, and pernicious anæmia; rheumatism; gout; rheumatic gout (or rheumatoid arthritis); gastric ulcer; chronic indigestion; chronic constipation; gallstones; asthma; Bright's disease; cancer; angina pectoris; eczema and other skin diseases.

* * *

Life-force and Healing-force are one and the same thing, and their origin and workings, although expressed through matter, are Spiritual—are of the Infinite Spirit of All, and are not knowable to the scientist seeking with his apparatus if he neglects to look with the eye of the Spirit and to know with the gift of Intuitive Knowledge.

* * *

There are, indeed, far more people fortunate enough to "feel" in touch with God than the average person who has no confidence in things spiritual has any idea of.

* * *

Although suggestion explains many things in psychical experience, it is questionable if it explains

everything that it has been asked to do in this connection.

* * *

The sort of difficulty one meets with in trying to explain everything by suggestion from that point of view is: Does it explain why one individual can soothe and convey manifest benefits whilst another cannot? Does it explain certain mental efforts which are at times brought about by psychotherapy in the instance of sceptical individuals? Does it explain the renewed energy, the feeling of vitality and strength, which thousands of people are accustomed to obtain through the medium of such processes as prayer, meditation, contemplation of scenes of great natural beauty, charitable actions, and so forth? It is inevitable that we must look for the cause of certain conditions of augmented powers of mind and body on a plane higher than the mental, and that plane necessarily appears to be that one which we know as the higher psychical, or spiritual, plane. In fact, that which is known to one section of the community as spiritual force appears to be the same thing as that known to others as mental force.

* * *

The mind must be free from disturbing thoughts if it is desired to lessen the barrier which appears to shut us off from the spiritual world. Further, when two or three are gathered together with the

object of obtaining help from and communion with Infinite Spirit, it is more likely that their goal will be attained than if they seek it individually. It seems likely that, by carelessness in our thoughts, many of us create barriers which debar us from spiritual influences which would benefit us greatly.

* * *

The cry of humanity to-day is, as it has always been, a cry for help to bear our burdens, to bear the miseries of sickness, the torments of unhappiness, the tortures of worry. It should be realised that for everyone in suffering and sorrow help may be nearer at hand than is generally supposed, and that rest could be brought to many a worried mind if we were to make it a more important part of life to endeavour to place ourselves in communication with the Infinite Spirit of Life.

* * *

The "Don't Worry" school have got hold of the wrong end of the stick. After all, worry of a grave kind is only too often the result of real adverse circumstances. Loss of means of support, loss of friends or dear ones are blows that only the full, confident realisation of a strong guiding Power behind frail man, and the feeling that in relation to us that great Power manifests itself in a Personal Expression, and in terms of Love, can enable suffering humanity to rise above. Business men and others sometimes tell me that the bothers of office work, the telephone, and the hundred and one other irritations that crop up daily must inevitably result in more or less ebullition of temper. Not at all. I say be protected from the petty troubles that would bother you. Are we to lose health just because we cannot rise above myriad irritations that, after all, have no sound basis? Is it not better to protect ourselves by a mental barrier that we can build by a little attention to the principles of self-control and will-power? We do not want strong wills to strain for success by inefficient, or indeed ill, methods. We want strong wills to "grow" thoughts and ideas of the right sort.

Many petty fears and worries can be entirely got rid of on the mental way—but there are circumstances when purely mental training must fail to rid us of the dread demon. Still, that it is possible to get rid of fear there is no doubt, although the essential condition of so doing is the acquirement of the true Faith-attitude, which is a matter of spiritual rather than of mental progress. In any case, practically all the petty fears that haunt daily life and wear down health can be got rid of on the mental way. The old proverb about not meeting troubles half-way forms a splendid rule of mental help. Form a habit of constantly asking why you should have any fear of this, that, and

the other. Constantly maintain an attitude of self-confidence, then, excepting in the great crises of life and death, when help from a higher plane must be sought, you will no longer be bothered by fears and worries that sap energy in all directions. Get rid of false pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, then the thought of loss of money or position—in themselves constant bogeys to this generation—will be rated at their true value, and will engender activity no doubt—but not fear.

* * *

Those whose mental development is not sufficiently advanced for them to obtain that mental or spiritual support that is all-sufficient for others under ordinary circumstances must certainly rely on material measures. Again, the mental strength and the absolutely perfect Faith that can conquer all physical diseases are so rare that in the present stage of man's progress he must rely-and, moreover, be thankful for-the marvellous operations that are the means of saving countless lives and of freeing from pain and ill-health untold numbers of sufferers. Can it be doubted that the growth of life-saving methods in medicine or surgery are any the less evidence of the working of "good" on the side of the human race when the race so desires. than the wonders of mental and spiritual healing? Is not all life from the Infinite Source of Life? Is not all healing from the same Infinite Source? All life is spiritual. And in its inner working all healing is spiritual, whether manifested through the physical, the mental, or the spiritual—whether expressed in results of body, mind, or spirit.

* * *

As an example of the action of simple suggestion may be cited the familiar fact that, however well an individual may feel, if several friends remark on his pallor of countenance, or want of cheerfulness, he soon begins to feel a little depressed, and to wonder if medical advice should be sought.

* * *

Good and evil cannot exist together. One or the other must win the day. See to it that your mind is filled with good, and you may rest assured that you need not bother about the evil. Fear, anger, and worry are most certainly products of mental states in which things we are calling evil have predominated. Their eradication makes not only for health, but for material success, for they are great wasters of energy.

* * *

Time and again when people allow fear to sway them, careful inquiry would show that the fear is groundless, and even where some plausible excuse for its presence may be given, it is quite true that the fear is *useless*. Do not try and suppress fear. Get rid of it. Realise its uselessness at all events, and part company with it. Fear cannot help us

Fear cannot be of the slightest use to us. A few weeks or months or years even spent in the realisation of these points will confer an actual blessing upon the whole system—physically as well as mentally. The world is full of fears to-day, and the whole atmosphere is surcharged with morbid suggestions and self-suggestions founded on or bringing with them fear.

* * *

Mental self-training is much more a means of obtaining better health: it is a means of getting the best out of life generally and attaining higher spiritual development in particular.

* * *

The benefits of mental self-help are to be looked for not only in "cures," but in the prevention of much ill-health commonly contributed to by wrong mental attitudes.

* * *

Satisfactory as it is to obtain better health by rooting out faults in one's thought-life, one's best work is really done in showing by the example of self-help how people can best help themselves.

* * *

Training to develop self-mastery and increased power of attention (concentration) necessarily makes for increased efficiency.

* * *

Self-control and banishment of petty angerthoughts and tormenting fear-thoughts, which are great wasters of energy, frees more power for the work we have to do in life.

* * *

Increasing mental power should be reflected in improving outward appearances. The sound mind in the sound body must be our ideal.

* * *

Never let misguided attempts at mental training or self-suggestion lead to the development of slack habits of mind.

* * *

Guard carefully your investigations of the subconscious and your experiments in reverie. The world of the subconscious is to many a tempting lotus-land, sojourn in which may lead to slackness in both mind and body.

* * *

The goal of rational self-help and self-development is full enjoyment of the many good things that life has to offer: be well, feel well, and look well is the ideal.

* * *

Endeavour to express in your body the mental values that you are striving for.

* * *

Live health. Think health. Saturate yourself with the idea of health. This will not mend a

broken leg or relieve a raging toothache, but it will make for better vitality and powers of resistance to any malady that may trouble you, and assist whatever treatment you may receive.

* * *

Build up a mental wall of healthy self-suggestions to shut out the morbid thoughts—suggestions—of ill-health that are being fired at you all day long by well-meaning meddlers.

* * *

Many persons spend much time giving themselves false suggestions about the weather and its possible effects on health: about the fashionable illness or operation: about the proximity of plague, the peril of influenza, and what not. A thousand and one horrors of this kind pester those who are of nervous habit and have not learnt to stand sentinel at the gate of their thoughts.

* * *

If all the mental power now concentrated on the contemplation of the morbid were directed to bettering conditions about us, the world would be a brighter and healthier place to-day.

APPENDIX

SOME EXERCISES TO IMPROVE ATTENTIVE CONTROL (CONCENTRATION)

THE following exercises will be found useful in the development of increased powers of attention and concentration, and so of increased self-control. Whatever enables the mental powers to be efficiently directed to any particular circumstance makes for greater self-mastery, and greater powers of Will and Action. The exercises now given are to some extent given in the order which it is best to follow if it is intended to work through the series. There is no reason why any one should not be picked out and adhered to, if it is found to help best. As a rule, I find that with all mental exercises it is not possible to lay down hard and fast rules for special types of defects for which assistance is needed. Some people pick out an exercise or self-suggestion formula and use it constantly with the greatest benefits, whilst others of apparently the same type—judged outwardly—prefer to rely on a very different set of exercises.

I. Concentration on Muscles.—In this exercise the object is to make single muscles, or groups of muscle, contract by a simple effort of will without the carrying out of any complex act, or even simple limb movement. It is remarkable how ability to contract the muscles readily depends on the accustomed formation of certain thought-pictures. For example, if one wishes to make any movement of an arm there is no difficulty in contracting the big muscles at back or front of that limb.

If, however, one asks someone to contract, say, the large muscles at the back of the arm, or the prominent biceps in front, without carrying out any definite action, considerable difficulty in doing so at once will often be experienced. Obviously, where this is so there is a lack of concentrative power as regards mind-muscle action, and a fair field for work in development. Anyone who has made a study of an anatomical diagram showing the main groups of muscles can vary this concentration exercise indefinitely. For those who have not given much thought to this-the action of their muscles-I would indicate the arm muscles, back and front, the leg and thigh muscles, the big muscles covering each side of the chest in front, and the jaw muscles, as being good examples on which to develop their mind-muscle control. Followers of physical culture will no doubt be able to develop such exercises further than I can in the scope of this chapter, as the subject is one of farreaching importance.

II. Relaxation Exercise.—Take a reclining or semirecumbent attitude and proceed to relax the whole body as follows: Close the eyes so as to withdraw the mind from distracting outside conditions, and give full attention to the matter in hand. Then, directing the thoughts to each foot and ankle in turn, endeavour to relax all muscles in that part of the body as thoroughly as possible. Having done this, proceed to deal with the other muscles and joints, ascending to the trunk, and finally to the shoulders and neck.

It is important to note that each step in the relaxation process must be mentally realised at the time. That is to say, a mental picture of the muscles and joints of each portion of the body in turn in a relaxed state must be formed and dwelt on. At the same time a mental order to the muscles to relax must be formulated before the movement is actually carried out.

When the utmost relaxation of the whole body has been attained, the eyes should be opened and the slack condition allowed to persist whilst mentally counting ten. Should the exercise tend to produce sleep, as it sometimes does in those unaccustomed to concentrating the attention in this way, it is best to carry it out with the eyes open all the time.

As many nervous states and other conditions of ill-health are followed or accompanied by intense marked tension of various muscles, it follows that a feeling of relief will often be experienced when complete bodily relaxation is obtained. And it is surprising how many people fail to relax their bodies entirely from one year's end to the other. For the due preservation and conservation of our nerve forces a complete relaxation of the muscular system should be carried out daily. This, of course, can quite easily be done just before going to sleep at night without personal inconvenience. Time and again one is told of the surprise with which people have found relief of pain or feeling of stress when they have made use of this simple exercise.

III. Tension Exercise.—The opposite effect can be obtained by formulating thought-pictures of tension instead of relaxation at the various stages of an exercise carried out similarly to the above. And at the end of it the tensed state should be maintained whilst mentally counting five only. A good combination psycho-physical exercise in which there is an alternation of relaxation and contraction of muscles may be carried out in the following steps:

r. Recline at full length on the back with feet together and arms at sides.

2. Close the eyes, withdraw the mind from outside impressions as far as possible, and reduce mental activity to a quiet, restful condition.

3. Relax every joint and muscle in the body as far as possible; begin with the feet and ankles and proceed

upwards.

(N.B.—This relaxation must be mentally realised at every step. Thus before relaxing the ankle-joint, for example, a mental picture of thorough relaxation of this part should be formed, and a mental order to the muscles to relax should be formulated before the movement is carried out.)

4. Inspire steadily whilst mentally counting eight at the same time, raising the arms above the head, fingers outstretched, with palms inwards. During inspiration gradually tense each joint and muscle in the body.

5. Stretch to the fullest extent whilst retaining the breath, mentally counting three, arms to be shoulders' width apart. Then clench the fists tightly and increase the muscular tension, whilst mentally counting three.

6. Expire steadily through the nostrils, mentally counting eight, bringing the arms to the sides, and relax gradually as in 3.

7. Rest a few moments and repeat.

IV. Exercises in Concentration and Attention.—I. In the quietude of your room take up some familiar object, e.g. a penny piece. Regard it steadily for two minutes, then, with the coin still before you, write down for ten minutes all the points you notice in connection with it. Such notes to be quite brief, and confined as far as possible to one or two words indicating qualities and conditions thereon. Do not write for longer than ten minutes, and avoid all mental strain. The object of the exercise is to develop the powers of attention and con-

centration steadily and without any "forcing" of the will.

Keep your list, and next day review it in connection with the same coin. Write again for ten minutes and you will be surprised at the number of fresh points that are revealed. Repeat again on subsequent days until no fresh ideas come to mind.

ra. Carry out the same exercise with less complex objects from time to time, not noting negatives.

The following forms a useful list of objects for (1) and (πa) :—

- (1) Clock or watch. (2) A flower. (3) Bread loaf. (4) Inkstand. (5) An apple. (6) A Coin. (7) Lump of coal. (8) A feather. (9) Sheet of notepaper. (10) A crystal sphere. (11) The figure 8.
- 2. Consider an object for five minutes without any "forcing" of attention. Merely think quietly over the various points that present themselves to your notice, then, putting the object aside, write down as many facts about it as you can remember in the space of ten minutes.

This exercise is an aid to memory as well as to concentration and attention alone.

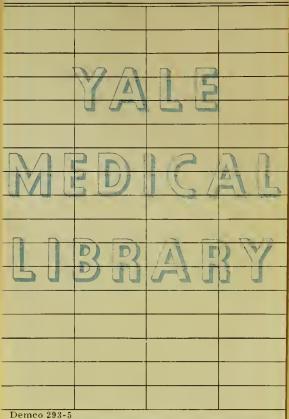
It should be carried out with different objects daily, more complex things being chosen as progress is made.

- 3. Go into a room, and walk about it, putting down as many general facts as you can in the space of ten minutes. Repeat with the same room on subsequent days, and note the daily addition to your list.
- 1 That is, do not write down negative points, e.g. that a penny is not new, or not anything else. Only note definite points in the affirmative.

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